ORBIT 65

Ideas
about Teaching
and Learning

Volume 14, Number 1
February 1983

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in Education

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The 1983 TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Summer Institute will be held in Toronto, July 4-August 12, 1983. The Institute will be hosted jointly by the Department of Linguistics, University of Toronto, and the Modern Language Centre, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The co-directors are Professors Ronald Wardhaugh and Merrill Swain. The theme of the 1983 Institute will be "English in bilingual and multicultural societies."

The 1983 TESOL Summer Institute will offer a wide variety of courses and mini-courses, a Forum Lecture series, and a number of related activities. The annual summer meeting of TESOL will be held during the Summer Institute, July 21-23, 1983.

Regular courses of six weeks duration, available either for credit or on a non-credit basis, will be offered.

A series of ten Forum Lectures, held in the late afternoon, will focus on issues related to the Summer Institute's theme. Among the lecturers will be Keith Spicer, Canada's first Commissioner of Official Languages, Jim Cummins, Fred Genesee, Bernard Spolsky, and Richard Tucker.

Accommodation for participants will be available on the campus of the University of Toronto. A handbook containing details on all matters relevant to the Institute (course descriptions, faculty, scheduling, mini-courses, accommodation, fees, visa requirements, lectures, scholarships, related activities) will be available in January, 1983. Requests and inquiries should be addressed to TESOL Summer Institute, School of Continuing Studies, 158 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2V8, Canada.

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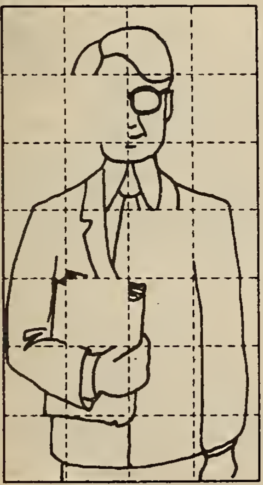
SUPERVISION:

Redefining Its Goals

T. J. Ritchie,
University of Manitoba

Newer theories of supervision as well as existing conditions in the education system are currently leading to a redefinition of the supervisor's role.[1]During the period of expansion in the school system, supervisors were kept busy making administrative decisions about teachers. Questions of tenure, promotion, termination, and "check-up" visits occupied all their time. But we are now in a period of declining enrolment. New teachers are not being hired, the majority of teachers have tenure, fewer promotion opportunities exist, and movement between schools has decreased. A highly educated, experienced, competent teaching force requires supervisors to make fewer such decisions.

Supervisors are now more commonly urged to focus their efforts on improving the effectiveness of experienced teachers. They are asked to ensure that a generally competent teaching force continues to develop and improve, and their role, thus redefined, emphasizes a responsibility to act as mentor rather than as monitor. My purpose here is to consider several questions associated with both newer and more traditional approaches to supervision designed to improve instruction.



What Is "Better Teaching?"

If one is to work with teachers with a view to improving the quality of instruction, it is necessary to have some sense of what constitutes "better teaching." Researchers have not answered that question, for their attempts to identify the characteristics of good teaching have yielded no conclusive results. The state of research on teaching is summarized by B. J. Biddle, who says, "after forty years of research we do not know how to define, prepare for, or measure teacher competence."[2] J. M. Paton agrees: "The most recent available references indicate that educational research has failed so far to define, to detect reliably, or to evaluate competence in teaching."[3] And even more recently it has been acknowledged that the practice of supervising teachers has been plagued by "the persisting lack of an adequate theoretical base for either teaching or supervision."[4] Research, therefore, provides no adequate theory to guide the supervisor who wishes to improve the quality of instruction.

Written works promoting supervision to improve instruction also provide an incomplete foundation for action. They typically offer varied exhortations and detailed process statements that block the view but do not cover the ground. It is therefore not surprising that there is a great gulf between theory and practice. As C. G. Sullivan recently noted, "Beginning supervisors are in for a surprise if they believe the description of their work in the literature."[5]

Professional judgment, it is sometimes argued, is the best measure of the quality of instruction. Yet in a thought-provoking Canadian study, Worth discovered that 63 school superintendents and 65 principals, after viewing a 15-minute videotape of a

grade 1 teacher at work, ranged in their ratings of her teaching performance from "Exceptional: demonstrates a high level of professional skill" to "Doubtful: has not demonstrated suitability for teaching."[6] While there is anecdotal evidence that most people believe they can identify the best teacher, Worth's study demonstrates that professional supervisors do not always agree, even about the same teacher. F. J. McDonald suggests that at least three different general teacher models can be identified.[7] Obviously, improving instruction under such conditions of diversity is a brave undertaking. The meaning of "improvement" and "development" apparently has more to do with the outcome of a political struggle than with the application of eternal truths.

Clinical supervision, as an example of a more recent approach to the question of what is good teaching, suggests that the answer lies in a collaborative process in which the supervisor and teacher agree on an objective and together work toward its achievement.[8] The process demands only limited agreement at any one time, but it also requires a spirit of cooperation and trust. Good teaching becomes whatever a supervisor and teacher can agree upon. This process of negotiation between educators compensates for shortcomings in the theoretical base. The subjective judgment of the supervisor becomes the ultimate discriminator of effectiveness.

Can Supervision Effect Change?

Even if we set aside questions about the meaning of "good" teaching, we must ask what evidence is available to suggest that supervision is the best method of effecting change (assuming that we accept the need for some kind of development). Are there other methods more effective still?

There is a dearth of evidence to show that supervision *has* much effect, though one Canadian study produced interesting results. The study was designed to examine the potential effects or outcomes of supervision by subjecting 78 University of Alberta student teachers to stressful supervision.[9] Regardless of the student teacher's performance, the "advisor" made specific comments that had previously been fabricated to indicate a disparity between the teacher's performance and the expected "standards." The student teachers then taught a second lesson. Of those in the study, 26 percent taught their second lesson as effectively as their first and 29 percent showed visible improvement in their teaching; however, a full 45 percent taught *less* effectively as a result of this supervisory process.

Relating these findings to intelligence, the same study revealed that when teachers were subjected to failure-stress supervision, the most intelligent got worse, the middle range showed a slight decline, and the least intelligent improved. These results should alert the supervisor to the need to know client teachers well and to give them positive and even individualized supervision. They suggest, too, that supervision can affect teacher behavior without necessarily improving instruction.

As far as traditional forms of supervision are concerned, there is evidence that supervisors and teachers do not share a common perception of its usefulness. Teachers have reported that the time spent with supervisors was "utterly wasteful," whereas supervisors tend to look on their work as having a lot of value. Supervisors are therefore apt to meet with both open and covert opposition.[10]

Systematic evaluation of the new type of supervision to improve instruction is required if we are to determine whether these patterns continue to prevail. There is preliminary evidence that this may be so, though teachers in Ontario who have experienced the "new" supervision diverge in their reported reactions. One elementary teacher said she liked it because she continued to do what she had planned anyway, another claimed it was a process whereby the supervisor assured himself that the teacher was doing what he thought should be done, and a third did not think of the process as supervision at all. Secondary school teachers showed more outright resistance and relied on their sense of superiority in subject knowledge to insulate themselves from the possibility of altering practice.[11]

What Social Forces Are at Play?

A final question: What social forces would wide-scale use of any new supervision process encounter? Ontario's professional teachers' organizations, for example, are mandated to increase the status and rewards of its members. These groups represent their membership as highly trained, responsible, self-generating, and autonomous career professionals. Consistent with this view, there should be no need for supervision at all. Indeed, in some countries, teachers once certified are deemed competent for life. One form of supervision in keeping with this professionalism would be a "college of teachers," a self-regulatory body fashioned after legal and medical professional associations. Whichever proposals are considered, teachers' organizations have political influence and will want a voice on policy.

At odds with this perspective is the view that the teacher is more a technical functionary. Such a bureaucratic orientation emphasizes "top down" decision making and a subordinate role for the teacher. Social forces pressing from this direction favor a shift away from a child-centred toward a content-centred and centrally controlled curriculum. This view is represented to some degree in the "back to basics" trend, in a call for standard examinations, and in demands for "accountability." This view would narrow the scope of "proper" teacher behavior, allowing supervisors to influence instruction by imposing and enforcing defined limits.

The interplay of these diverse forces for change makes for an unpredictable outcome in the evolution of supervision policy. In some areas of Ontario a redefinition of the goal of supervision is already taking place. Whether this new sense of purpose will become "state of the art" thinking or will be relegated to the wastebasket of education fads is difficult to predict. It is superfluous to say that programs that promise instructional improvement conform with every serious educator's desire to achieve excellence. But statements such as "everyone can improve" and "supervisors want to help" provide inadequate proof of meaningful innovation. The "new" supervision is without sufficient grounding in research and is unproven in practice. A bureaucratically oriented form of supervision that monitors and subjectively evaluates teacher behavior while promising to improve instruction only masks traditional supervision with "apple pie" rhetoric. A redefinition of the goal of supervision must be accompanied by a clear demonstration of practical effectiveness. □

Notes

1. See P. Ross, "The Supervision of Programs and Instruction: The York County Approach," *Ontario Council for Leadership in Education* **20** (Fall 1980), and also Halton County Board of Education, *Handbook for Co-operative Supervision and Evaluation* (Ontario: Halton County Board of Education, 1980).
2. B. J. Biddle, "The Integration of Teacher Effectiveness Research," in *Contemporary Research on Teacher Effectiveness,* eds. B. J. Biddle and W. H. Ellena (Holt, 1964).
3. J. M. Paton, "Crisis in Confidence in the Teaching Profession," *Teacher Education* **8** (Spring 1975).
4. O. J. Storey and I. Housego, "Personnel Supervision: A Descriptive Framework," *The Canadian Administrator* **29**, no. 6 (March 1980).
5. C. G. Sullivan, "Supervisory Expectations and Work Realities: The Great Gulf," *Educational Leadership* **39**, no. 6 (March 1982).
6. W. H. Worth, "Can Administrators Rate Teachers?" *The Canadian Administrator* **1**, no. 1 (October 1961): 1–6.
7. F. J. McDonald, "The National Commission on Performance Based Education," *Phi Delta Kappan* **45**, no. 5 (1974).
8. R. Goldhammer, R. A. Anderson, & R. J. Krajewski, *Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1980).
9. A. Brown, "Teaching Under Stress," *Canadian Administrator* **1** (1962).
10. See A. Blumberg, *Supervisors and Teachers: A Private Cold War* (McCutchan, 1974), and also A. Blumberg and E. Amidon, "Teacher Perceptions of Supervisor–Teacher Interaction," *Administrator's Notebook* **14**, no. 1 (1965).
11. T. J. Ritchie, from interviews done in 1980 for a study in progress.

Multicultural Education:

The Hope and the Reality

Sandra Parker,
Northwestern University, Boston

In the U.S., governmental agencies and other institutions have earmarked large sums of money under such categories as "ethnic education," "bilingual education," and "multicultural education" for programs whose objectives are often as undefined as their materials and methods of implementation. Sufficient time has now elapsed to permit a preliminary evaluation of the prevailing instructional patterns that are characteristic of these programs and of the benefit children derive from them. Though the Canadian situation does not precisely parallel that in the U.S, the content of the article that follows sounds a strong cautionary note on both sides of the border.

The initiation of a discussion about a field of study as ill-defined and vague as multicultural education is fraught with obstacles and pitfalls. The term implies different things to different people, for our criteria and objectives are dissimilar and often in conflict. To create the illusion of consensus needed to acquire funding, basic differences are frequently overlooked or swept under the rug. The unasked question that is carefully avoided is how institutions can move ahead if they do not know in which direction they are going, or, as is more frequently the case, if they appear to be going in several, opposing directions simultaneously.

If we are to understand whether there is justification for an area called "multicultural education" at all, we must examine the following questions:

1. What are the conflicting goals and objectives of multicultural education?
2. What are its current features?
3. What is the effect of current approaches on the learner?
4. What are the attitudinal implications of cognitive distortions?
5. How can we modify negative attitudes?
6. What makes curricular fragmentation so difficult to confront?

Conflicting Goals and Objectives

Multicultural education may be viewed as a stopgap measure to defuse violence and conflict, or as a constant to preserve the integrity of each element of the cultural mosaic that makes up the population of North America. Between these extremes is a continuum in which fall objectives that range from using bilingual education as a transition for non-English speakers until they can successfully assimilate into English-speaking classrooms, to perpetuating the ethnic language and/or the cultural entities of groups, to increasing self-esteem and majority appreciation of minority cultures. There are also some who refer to *non*-cultural experiences offered to minority groups as "multicultural education." The underlying assumption in this case is that it is the client population, rather the content offered, which determines whether education is or is not multicultural. However, the greatest ideological incompatibility is to be found between those who have a commitment to preserving diversity as a positive virtue

and those who perceive multiculturalism as a temporary expedient for reducing conflict and promoting a more equitable distribution of goods, services, and power.

The instructional confusion resulting from the philosophical and fiscal tug of war among factions who prefer a casual alliance to a clear-cut policy is not to be imagined. Thoughtful educators suggest that we are reaching a point where the tail is wagging the dog, and that disparate, poorly articulated efforts to make curricular restitution for years of neglect and distortion of the experiences of minorities are producing other forms of imbalance and exaggeration that project inaccurate views of both individual groups and the nation as a whole.[1]

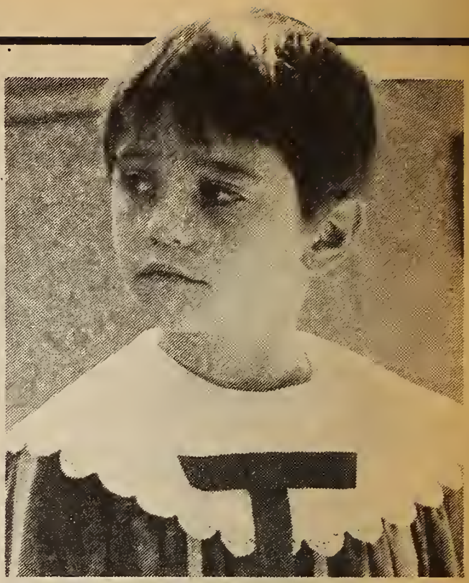
Students exposed to such distortions may conclude that particular groups are single dimensioned and that typecasting them according to an exclusive major factor such as victimization, immigrant origin, or struggle for equality is accurate and acceptable.[2] The evolution and diversity of social, economic, political, educational, and health-related behaviors and attitudes within groups—and within subgroups of groups—and their proper weighting within the total fabric of American life are hardly if ever evident in the materials produced by developers of multicultural curricula, if they are considered at all.

Current Features

While serious consideration of assumptions, definitions, and objectives is certainly a first-level priority and long overdue, an examination of current multicultural practices may highlight issues that are educationally important regardless of philosophical orientation, and should command attention in any comprehensive reconceptualization of the field. What are the curricular features of multicultural education? Are they durable and worthwhile in any respect? Or are they flimsy and superficial? Are some of these characteristics invisible in impact, except for the expenditure of human and fiscal resources? May some of them do real damage to the mind and the psyche of the learner? Let us look at some of these elements in greater detail.

Many of the multicultural units in use in schools today are misnomers, in that they are *single*-culture packages (rather than *multi*-cultural materials) presented in isolation from other parts of the social science and humanities programs. The materials in these packages tend to categorize groups by race, nation of origin, and/or language of heritage. Invariably these categorizations oversimplify and overlook significant variables. White Americans are grouped by nation of origin (e.g., Irish Americans, Italian Americans) or by religion or culture (e.g., Jewish Americans). Japanese and Chinese Americans are identified primarily by nation of origin, and to lesser extent by race, as Asians. Black Americans are defined racially in most instances, although cultural differences stemming from geographic origins are as distinctive among them (e.g., rural southerners, urban northerners, Jamaicans, Cape Verdeans, Trinidadeans) as are those among White Americans. Hispanics are frequently treated as a cultural group in spite of enormous cultural and racial differences within and among—for example—Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Mexican Americans.

While minority cultures are detailed in multicultural curricula, the characteristics of the majority or mainstream culture in which the minorities live remains vague and undefined. Moreover, in this kaleidoscope of cultural diversity, little if any attention is paid to behaviors and attitudes that are expressions of social class, in spite of the fact that there are scholars who maintain that class similarities are growing increasingly significant in American life and that they greatly modify racial and ethnic differences.[3] This tendency to oversimplify tends to occur in all subjects where individuals may have limited data, and multiculturalism is no exception.

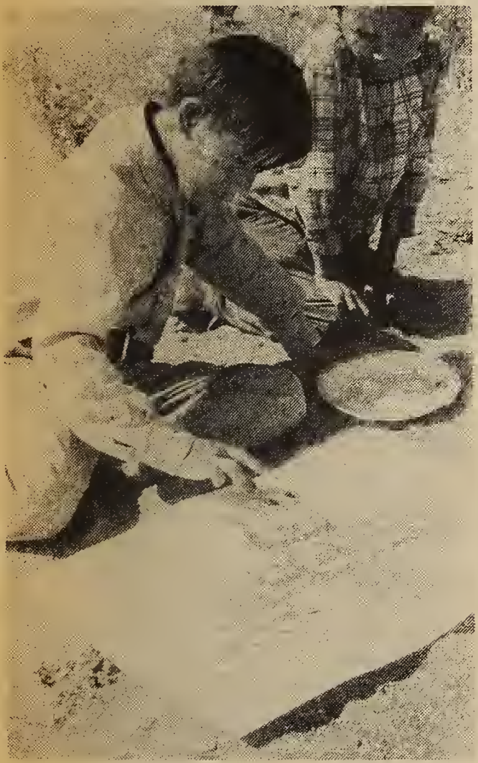


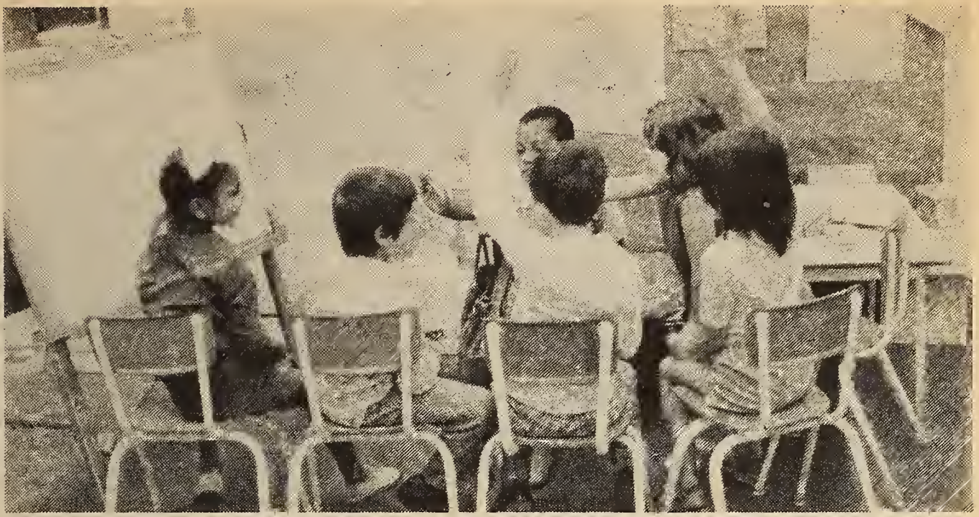
Strenuous efforts to collect information about minority groups, however defined, and to make materials accessible to teachers, have been most conspicuous in recent years. In many instances the resources are assembled and categorized, but their conversion into learning experiences is left to the implementer. Typically that translation into viable lessons is not done, and the materials are used "as is." What is learned from them is frequently totally incidental and of questionable value.

At the elementary level many multicultural programs "expose" children to ethnic music. Efforts to gain an understanding of the Puerto Rican way of life from an interpretation of the lyrics of songs, from an awareness of the occasions upon which the music is played, from an analysis of the setting from which it emerged, or from a description of the nature of the cultures that influenced Puerto Rico are generally not made. Records of Puerto Rican songs and dances may be played. Pupils listen, clap, sing the words, move in rhythm to the music, or are taught the dance steps, as the teacher considers appropriate. Expected outcomes from such an experience are rarely defined in advance. The most common aim expressed by teachers and curriculum designers is to get children to identify Hispanic music and enjoy it.

This predisposition to focus exclusively upon the sensory does not seem to be of great concern to educators. If the resource is motivating, it is felt that some sensitizing or "awareness raising" will occur, and anything of that kind is considered all to the good. Any type of incremental familiarity with cultural groups cannot help but be useful in reducing conflict, increasing harmony, and making individuals feel more self-confident. How humble are our expectations, and how simplistic and naive our notions about how to achieve even these humble expectations!

What type of learning emerges from this smorgasbord approach to multicultural education? To the extent that materials and resources are organized at all (and for many cultural groups, though not all, the collections are massive), they are categorized topically under such headings as Famous People, Foods, Holidays, Music, Dance, Customs, Historical Events, and the like. The problem with this approach is that it is inert and does not provide the teacher with a focussed way of thinking about a subject. The topic Hawaii, for example, does not by itself direct teachers to seek out resources on such aspects as the multi-ethnic population of the islands. Instead, the teacher might select a film on the pineapple industry because it is *about* Hawaii and a teacher across the hall happens to have it. Consequently, classroom experiences relating to categories tend at worst to be labelling or naming activities, and at best, as indicated above, perceptual and descriptive ones. Either way, learning remains at a fairly superficial level, even though in the latter case it is more motivating and attractive. The "whats," "whens," "whos," and "wheres" may receive minimal consideration, but the "whys," "hows," "how comes," and "so whats"—that is, the causes, processes, consequences, implications, and ramifications of a topic—are totally overlooked. The exclusion of such factors results in intellectual sabotage of major proportions, and this sabotage is reflected in such unintended learning outcomes as distortions of information, stereotypes, caricatures, and more entrenched attitudes of superiority.





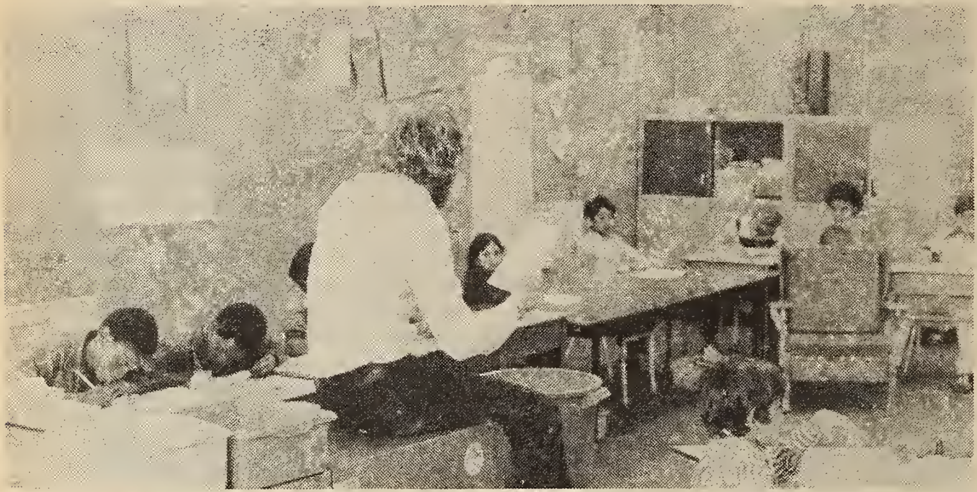
The Intellectual Effect of Current Approaches

Underlying all of the above is a lack of provision for comprehensive cognitive growth. The absence of a conceptual and contextual structure that makes possible the use of illustrative data at various levels of sophistication forces a fairly standardized set of activities upon all pupils in a class, regardless of their individual abilities, personal interests, or talents. Moreover, if topics are selected without prior definition of the fundamental generalizations that are to be developed, it is doubtful that the learner will receive the information about a single cultural group or several groups that is most important to understanding the essential characteristics of other cultures and their way of life. Without generalizations or some other equally powerful, conceptual framework, the learner is immersed in a sea of data, with no strategies for organizing ideas about a culture or coping with cross-cultural comparisons—both ostensible goals of multicultural programs.

Since these are serious charges, let us further examine the inappropriate learning outcomes alleged and the types of curricular materials that seem to produce them. It has been argued that the topical categorization of information, while perfectly adequate as an organizational approach to resources, is much less satisfactory, even harmful, when resources are used "as is" without being converted into instructional experiences. There are several factors that need to be considered. The major one is that using such topics as holidays, foods, or music does not focus thinking in a given direction, as a thematic approach might. On the surface this may not appear to be a serious matter. In fact it might be dismissed as a difference in style. In reality it is much more than that. The cognitive neutrality of a topical approach not only encourages the inappropriate selection of resources, but also permits an exaggeration of the more observable aspects of a piece of content and does not direct the learner to the kind of thinking activity that helps prevent inappropriate weighting and ranking of phenomena. Consequently, data may be inflated or deflated in importance, and information that is in no way equivalent may be equated because it seems to fit under the same topical umbrella.

An examination of the category "Holidays," as it is presented at the primary level in schools, is a good example of this association by proximity. In an effort to give pupils an appreciation of the customs and rituals of different ethnic groups, educators often use the month of December to present festive practices that fall during this period—namely, those associated with Christmas, Chanukah, and holidays celebrated at this time in other parts of the world. Teachers are provided with materials that describe traditional foods, events, and related personalities. It matters not at all that holidays falling at other times during the year may have more in common with Christmas than does Chanukah (although they, too, are not completely equivalent). Is this a trivial issue or is it one that is a characteristic weakness of many multicultural programs?

What do children learn from this lumping together of December holidays? They learn, for example, that lighting Christmas trees is a Christian tradition and the lighting of a menorah (Chanukah) is a Jewish tradition. Are these activities at all parallel? The former commemorates a religious event, the birth of Christ, although there are also some non-Christian aspects to the ritual. The latter celebrates the military victory of the Jewish Maccabees over the Greeks who controlled and tried to hellenize Judea. Christmas is a major Christian holiday whose significance is primarily religious. Chanukah, on the other hand, is not considered a major holiday by observant Jews, and its importance is predominantly historical, cultural, and perhaps even nationalistic. Its meaning and significance has been distorted in the United States, even as the meaning of Christmas has been diluted, secularized, and commercialized. In schools, comprehension of the meaning of these holidays is gained through manipulation of gifts, music, foods, and decorations. These activities, while pleasant, serve neither to illuminate examined events and circumstances nor as a motivating introduction to such an examination. Although similarities and differences may be alluded to in the curriculum, they tend not to be well defined, and since the holidays are presented simultaneously, they are perceived as equivalent. If educators wished to seek out analogous holidays they might select the Fourth of July to go with Chanukah, since these two holidays are more similar to one another, both in impact and in significance, than they are to Christmas. Christmas, on the other hand, is more equivalent to Shavuoth (the Feast of Weeks), which occurs during May or June, than it is to Chanukah.



The distortions described above that result from (1) clustering content around topics and (2) neglecting to convert resources into comprehensive learning experiences are characteristic of much of the information provided within multicultural programs. Children are thus deprived of an accurate view of their world and do not increase their understanding of relationships among events. In the process, they do not acquire the intellectual tools they need to appreciate which aspects of a people are most crucial to their past and present way of life. They also do not have the opportunity to practise ranking data in significance and impact. Consequently, their ability to make rational judgments is cumulatively impaired.

Schools may be as guilty of negligence as are well-meaning parents who unknowingly abuse a child's physical health by providing a poor diet. Innocuous as an exclusively sensory curriculum may seem, its long-range damage is incalculable, in relation to both multicultural objectives and learning to confront general conditions and problems in every area of life. An examination of the limited criteria used by adult Americans to comprehend significant issues and to select public officials on the basis of their positions on these issues further underscores the great need for appropriate intellectual nutrition in all educational endeavors, including those that contain multicultural components.

The selection of content according to the relationship it bears to primary characteristics of a cultural group is not an easy task. Consideration must be given to the depth and breadth provided by a specific set of experiences, and of course to the age and maturity of the learners. No matter how limited the intended exposure, however, content should have integrity and accuracy. In some ways, the more limited the immersion in multicultural content, the more insight, skills, and sophistication the teacher needs to avoid selecting exotic but superficial information about an ethnic or racial group, thereby excluding more central characteristics or phenomena owing to time constraints.

Unfortunately, well-intentioned but nevertheless casual selection of multicultural content is fairly common because of a lack of what Geneva Gay has termed "ethnic literacy."[4] Without a reservoir of information infinitely greater than the amount that might possibly be presented to learners either directly or indirectly, the teacher is not in a position to squander, reject, or exclude information as he or she sees fit. It is possible that heavy reliance on prepackaged curricula has lulled teachers into a false sense of security about how little one need know to teach. But how much information a teacher should have about a cultural group before attempting to teach about it is not definable. Clearly, the more the better, and the ongoing pursuit of knowledge provides for the filling in of gaps and for awareness of obsolete data and new information. What can be said with certainty is that teaching from a body of content that does not exceed what is to be found within the materials typically prepared for the learners is unconscionable.

The Attitudinal Implications of Cognitive Distortions

I have discussed the intellectual limitations of the approach to multicultural education currently taken in many schools. It is important to remember, however, that what one knows deeply affects how one feels, and that limited information often results in attitudes and values that are completely at odds with the achievement of such desired and expected objectives as increased empathy, appreciation, and sense of identification.

Several examples from second, fifth, and sixth grade classes engaged in the study of cultures other than their own provide evidence of the potential attitudinal harm that may result from heavy emphasis on "what is" without reference to why these phenomena exist and what their implications may be. A multiracial group of second graders were all appalled by pictures of naked Australian aborigines who, in their search for food, were digging with their hands for insects. The teacher working with the class provided no background on the climate and the natural resources of the barren terrain in which the aborigines live, nor did she attempt to engage her pupils in an analysis of the resourcefulness necessary to survive in such an environment. Fifth graders in a different school system were shown a film of Eskimos eating raw meat with their hands. Again, the teacher did not offer a context for interpreting this behavior. Notions about the scarcity of resources for cooking and making utensils were not presented. In both cases the children emerged from the experience with an increased sense of the superiority of their own American culture and a more focussed sense of revulsion for what they deemed barbaric and animal-like behavior. Sixth graders engaged in building a Pueblo village turned to a student teacher and said, "Why did those people remain in such a dry, hot place without trees and shade? They must be stupid!"

The attitudinal effects of these educational experiences are clear, and if evaluations were to be done through the collection of unsolicited comments, rather than through evaluation forms that ask learners to indicate agreement or disagreement with certain "patriotic" attitudes, the extent of newly acquired empathies and antipathies could be more accurately assessed. We might find to our great dismay that we have in many instances been inadvertently at work developing negative stereotypes in the minds of children.

To maintain a proper sense of objectivity, however, it is important to consider whether positive attitudes acquired through limited data are any more valuable than negative attitudes acquired from limited data. In the jargon used by educators the term "stereotyping" is taken to mean projecting a *negative* image of a group by exaggerating or caricaturing a particular characteristic while ignoring other features that might guarantee a more accurate and balanced weighting of variables. Whereas generalizations that take into account all available, relevant data on a variable are valuable to learners, I must conclude that stereotypes are not valuable—even when they result in positive rather than negative attitudes.[5] If we defined stereotyping in terms of skewed or limited presentation of data, rather than in terms of negative valence of result, this might dramatically alter our perception of the quality of many multicultural materials now in use.

The Modification of Negative Attitudes

There is also a great need to focus attention upon various types of destructive attitudes and to extinguish them by a series of steps, the first of which is to acknowledge their existence. However, in designing curricular materials that attempt to increase awareness and produce less biased feelings, a number of factors are frequently overlooked. First, are all the causes of negativism toward others presented in an accurate manner? Second, do the instructional resources and strategies currently in use reflect what is known about the conditions that best facilitate attitudinal change?

Although it is true that interactions among groups may stem from feelings of superiority and hostility, they can also be influenced by fear for physical safety, fear of loss of group or cultural identity, fear of economic disruption, generalized fear of the unknown, and other frustrations. In fact, even though the attitudes of one individual or group toward another are rarely the result of any single factor, the notion of multiple causality in attitude formation receives little emphasis in our multicultural programs. While recognition of the many causes of negative attitudes does nothing to lighten the devastating burden of their impact upon victimized groups, not all of these feelings are similarly motivated and equally worthy of being branded as unmitigated bigotry. Furthermore, the consequences of such wholesale condemnation serve to harden attitudes rather than change them.

Individuals and groups must feel understood and accepted before they will risk change. Examination of curricular materials and of instructional strategies provides little ground for hope that conditions exist that encourage the candid expression of real feelings by children, parents, and teachers. Social and legislative issues pertaining to minority groups are sometimes touched upon in schools, but reactions to them are infrequently solicited unless an emergency arises—and at that point calm, objective discussion is virtually impossible.

Avoidance of issues is often justified on the grounds that some children are too young to become embroiled in controversy and teachers are too busy with routine tasks to take on responsibilities that, to many, seem beyond the province of the school; consequently, questions like the ones that follow are rarely aired. Does the desire of the Amish to retain their isolation stem from hatred or from attitudes related to ethnic survival? What are the implications for other groups who may, like the Amish, feel that physical proximity is essential to cultural continuity?[6] If a cultural mosaic is preferable to a melting pot, what conditions must exist to maintain it and are those conditions acceptable? Is the hesitation of some adults of all races to walk after dark in particular neighborhoods always to be understood as an expression of hostility, or can it be perceived as a reflection of anxiety, real or imagined? Are accusations of ethnocentricity helpful in changing attitudes, particularly among people who, whether rightly or wrongly, also identify themselves as the victimized? These issues deserve attention in classrooms, and educators must address them with available but neglected resources if they are to confront some of the unmet needs of their communities.[7]

Children must also be encouraged to express their feelings, and their teachers must have available to them materials and teaching strategies that reduce anxiety and foster a greater sense of communal security and well-being. When encouraged by a student teacher who had been given the assignment of planning a current events lesson, first graders in a working-class community near Boston expressed their feelings about a bussing plan to be implemented in 1980–81. They viewed the problem from the frame of reference of six-year-olds ("The teachers in the new school may not be as nice as our teachers"; "The children might not be as friendly as the children we know"). The student teacher, struggling with these responses on her own and with no curricular support from the school, indicated to her pupils that their teachers might also be transferred to other schools, an inappropriate comment in view of the high level of already existing anxiety. The staff made no effort to indicate to the children that their counterparts in the schools to which they were to be bussed might have similar apprehensions about them. It might also have heartened the pupils to be told that a pleasant welcome awaited each of them in their new schools. Preliminary orientation visits to new sites might do much to reduce fear and to staunch the defection from public schools that is not uncommon in some communities. Only when children, parents, and teachers feel sufficiently secure to discuss all aspects of intergroup relations, in a manner appropriate to the age level, can deep-seated attitudes be modified.

The Difficulties in Dealing with Curricular Fragmentation

Does the previous discussion about weakness in the selection of content and in the development of desirable attitudes indicate the need for more time to be devoted to multicultural education and to the creation of additional units and kits? Should teachers, who are already overburdened with skill programs, be asked to set aside hours for added, discrete multicultural experiences?

It is clear that there is no need for more of the same approach. What is needed is a different one entirely. Current programs drain the time and energy of teachers and divert learners because they are activities superimposed on an already fragmented set of experiences. If we look beyond multicultural education to other subject areas, we notice that, for example, math and reading skills—which are awarded massive blocks of time in school programs—are also devoid of context and coherence. It is possible that scores in these subjects remain low because children are being asked to use skills in a vacuum, or even worse to compute and to decode within artificial contexts, manipulating data that are not identifiable with human experience.

The ultimate irony may be that the conscious decision made by educators during the last decade to promote skill and process goals at the expense of knowledge and attitudes has been rendered futile because it is fundamentally impossible to remove social contexts from learning experiences without impairing their value. However, it should be stressed that information about cultural groups is ideally suited to providing children with stimulating, natural settings in social studies, language and literature, science, math, and the arts. An integrated presentation of content and skills can improve retention in the skill areas, while simultaneously increasing knowledge and refining interpersonal sensitivities.

In recent years, multicultural education, a newcomer on the scene, has fared no better, and sometimes worse, than other areas of the curriculum, owing to the prevailing conventional wisdom that learning is simplified—when it is in fact fragmented—by separating skills from the "burden" of content. There has also existed a tendency to treat attitudes in isolation and to hope that positive values and feelings would spring full-born from introspection alone.[8]

The notion that school experiences are in need of major revision is not novel, and it has attracted converts. Nevertheless the lip service paid to the idea is not yet reflected in most curricula. An obvious reason for this is that it is always easier to criticize than to provide constructive recommendations. Furthermore, changes resulting in a fundamental reconceptualization of curricula are far more threatening organizationally than are incremental "band aids" that are directed at fashionable, *au courant* labels like "multicultural education." Regrettably, the facile creation of new categories does not, in and of itself, address the issues of theory, design, and substance that should precede the establishment of structures if form is to follow function.

Some of those who see the need for change tend to recommend the fusion of cultural elements into the programs of various disciplines as they are now constituted.[9] Others suggest the construction of curricula around themes rather than individual disciplines. It is possible that additional patterns of integration may be feasible and promising. All of them should be given consideration, particularly at the pre-elementary and elementary levels, since it is at these early stages of human development that the individual's learning habits and attitudes are most influenced.

Summary

I have attempted to focus attention upon three elements that are of major importance in assessing the quality of multicultural education and that seem in fact to be essential in evaluating any set of learning experiences. The first was a description of the various assumptions that may underlie multicultural programs. I have suggested that they are often contradictory, and that they are generally insufficiently defined before curricula are constructed and implemented. Consequently, confusion often reigns.

A second element concerns the effect of curricular design upon learning experiences in all areas, including multicultural education. I have suggested that the use of natural contexts would improve the quality of educational experiences, that information about cultural groups is ideal for that purpose, and that the separation of content from skills is detrimental. Clearly, careful thought is necessary before we can select specific philosophical assumptions and construct a curricular model to implement a set of beliefs and values. It should be noted, however, that while philosophy provides the assumptions and the goals, and organizational structures describe the road that will be travelled to reach them, it is the nature of the encounters en route that can enhance or destroy any scheme. All too often, educators, under pressure from prestigious constituents, powerful lobbies, and occasionally personal need, lurch fitfully from one philosophical or organizational position to another, while spending almost no time at all on the substance of what will be learned and how it will be taught.

I have therefore chosen to leave the issues of philosophy and structure to another time when I can accord them the analytical scrutiny they deserve, and to direct most of my attention to the third element, that of improving the quality of multicultural offerings, regardless of philosophical direction and organizational framework. This was done in the belief that some transcendent pedagogical strategies are better than others, and that to ignore them is to do serious damage to the learning process. My article addresses the implications and ramifications of this claim.

I have described problems and made suggestions. The impression has been left, and intentionally so, that in maintaining the status quo and permitting the proliferation of mediocre "culture packages" we insult the capacities of learners and the professional standards with which good teachers identify. Our continued commitment to "business as usual" has caused us to set our sights too low, hoping only to achieve some acceptance of ourselves and of our neighbors, while we ignore the fact that good schools and good teachers can help produce individuals whose concern for people emanates not only from ethical considerations of what is right and kind, but also from a fundamental enchantment with the rich diversity of the human experience.

Notes

1. Thomas Stowell, "Myths about Minorities," *Commentary Magazine* (New York: American Jewish Committee, August 1979): 33–37.
2. Eric Foner, book review of *A People's History of the United States*, by Howard Zin, in *New York Times Book Review Section* (March 2, 1980), p. 10.
3. See *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, by Milton Gordon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), and *The Declining Significance of Race*, by William J. Wilson (University of Chicago Press, 1978).
4. Geneva Gay, "Ethnic Pluralism in Social Studies Education: Where to From Here?," *Social Education* (Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies, January 1980): 52-55
5. For example, the projected image of the anti-slavery northeasterners often excludes data about the profits reaped by New Englanders from the triangular slave trade.
6. Letter from the president of the Boston Hebrew College, in the *Hebrew College Bulletin* (Spring 1980), asking parents to encourage their children to attend local universities in order that the values of the home and the ethnic educational community might continue to have impact.
7. An example of such a neglected resource is "Feeding the Lions," a poem by Norman Jordan describing the feelings of inner-city residents towards workers who do their work bureaucratically and fearfully.
8. The Magic Circle is an example of an activity undertaken to encourage children to express their personal feelings within a framework that is not instructional. It is frequently directed by professional support staff rather than teachers.
9. Geneva Gay, "Ethnic Pluralism." □

"What's a nice teacher like you doing in a place like this?"

EDUCATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Dale E. Shuttleworth,
York Board of Education

It should have been a day to be proud. Goodness knows, there hadn't been many in Donny's eighteen years. His family had wandered throughout Northern Ontario, from mining town to lumber camp, until his father just disappeared one day. Before Donny's ninth birthday, his mother took her four children to live in Toronto, where she suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be hospitalized. A series of foster homes and a stint in training school led to his current address in a group home in the east end of the city. No, it hadn't been easy.

He'd never spent that much time in school or been able to find a real job. One day he heard they were hiring in a waste paper recycling plant that was part of a program created to employ disadvantaged youth. He didn't think he'd have a chance but he sure could use the money. To his surprise, he got the job, learned to sort paper, drive a fork lift, and operate the baler. He never missed work and felt a sense of accomplishment for the first time in his life.

The previous Friday, after Donny had been six months on the job, the General Manager called him into her office to offer him the position of Warehouse Supervisor. Although he'd always got along well with his workmates and had even trained new employees, he wasn't sure he could make the grade as a supervisor. But his probation officer encouraged him to give it a try, so he accepted.

The week had gone well. The General Manager was pleased when she handed him the pay cheques to distribute to the workers in the plant. Fifteen minutes later, though, he was still pacing back and forth in front of the office. When asked if something was wrong, Donny hung his head in shame and stammered "I'm—I'm sorry M'am, I can't tell who they belong to." Only then did the General Manager realize that Donny was one of the five million Canadians estimated to be functionally illiterate, in that their reading problems put them at a distinct disadvantage in our modern society.[1]

The answer does not seem to be to get people like Donny back into formal schooling. Too often, they view their original contacts with educational institutions as a negative, degrading experience. In fact, the most effective vehicle for adult basic education may well be an informal, responsive environment respecting the needs and interests of the learner as a person.[2]

Successful literacy programs in developing countries have often integrated social and economic objectives—for example, in one area the establishment of a fisherman's cooperative with an adult basic education component proved to be an effective way to improve the quality of life because it met both literacy and employment needs.

A little over a year ago, an experimental project was undertaken to explore the feasibility of this integrated approach in Metropolitan Toronto. To help alleviate the more than 15 percent level of unemployment among 15- to 24-year-olds, Youth Ventures Developments of Metro Toronto was established as a not-for-profit corporation devoted to community economic development, and in June of 1981, Youth Ventures in turn approached the York Board of Education to request the services of a teacher to work with fifteen disadvantaged young employees in their waste paper recycling enterprise, Youth Ventures Recycling Incorporated. The teacher assigned to the project, who was given the title Academic and Life Skills (ALS) Coach, was to be responsible for individualized instruction in academic subjects, remedial upgrading, technical skills, vocational information, and counselling and life skills as required. He started that October and was to spend up to 30 hours a week at the plant.

This was not to be a traditional teaching assignment, however. To quote from the report of the ALS Coach after his first three months on the job:

> *Implementation of the teacher's role was achieved with careful consideration. Suspicious of the formal educational experience, the young people at Youth Ventures took an explorative "wait and see" attitude towards the academic support person and life skills coach. I saw clearly that if the business was to become a non-traditional learning environment, the "teacher" must necessarily become thoroughly involved with the day to day operations. Accordingly, I began work alongside the young people, sorting, baling, and loading in the warehouse and working outside on the trucks. In doing so, I learned from the "inside" just what the work demanded, how the company operated, and I established positive relationships with everybody. Through these involvements and a positive projection of my personality, much interest was generated in the possibilities of my functioning also as a "teacher."*
>
> *I began to teach by finding out the*

Work at the Youth Ventures paper recycling plant: above — preliminary sorting; below — the General Manager going over records with a young employee.

educational standards of each individual, and by explaining that my presence at Youth Ventures meant that cooperative educational credit could be gained "on the job." The response was gratifying, in that the demands for "classes" became so high as to challenge my time in accommodating them. Happily, this situation has continued and my role as teacher has expanded into all aspects of the business and further into the lives of the young people.

The educational and skill-related benefits of the program are many. The following work-related topics were treated formally in small groups and individually on the job: (a) training in safety, sorting, baling, fork lift, and maintenance; (b) kinesiology—human movements related to work operation; (c) work habits and attitudes; (d) design and technical drawings; (e) communication and social skills; (f) training for supervision.

Academically, I have tested all language skills and numeracy levels, and prescribed and implemented remediation where necessary. I have advised regarding procedures and options for upgrading related to night school, community colleges, correspondence school, individual study, return to school, and cooperative education as well as on continuing education courses and resources.

In life skills classes we have dealt with health, communication, interpersonal skills, social attitudes and values, personal financial management, and driver education for classes G. M. and D. licenses.

In my developing role as counsellor, I have dealt with the following areas: legal, interpersonal work-related, personal, health, financial, career, and educational.[3]

But did the assignment of the ALS Coach compromise business objectives at Youth Ventures? This is what the General Manager had to say to the York Board of Education:

From a social standpoint the concept of education in the workplace excited me; however, I was admittedly skeptical of the concept from a business point of view. Some of my business concerns were: the economic impact on a new business, the possible adverse effects on productivity, the potential increase in absenteeism, turnover and effects on employee morale, and the possibility of a clash in objectives between the ALS Coach and Management.[4]

Despite these initial concerns, dramatic gains were noted in the business operation after the ALS Coach had been with Youth Ventures for three months:

- *Productivity*—Increased productivity of 47%.
- *Employee turnover*—Prior to the arrival of the ALS Coach the turnover rate was 97%. During the first three months turnover decreased to 35%.
- *Absenteeism and lateness*—The incidence of absenteeism and lateness declined

Scenes from another Youth Ventures enterprise, York Wood Works, where scrap lumber is recycled as furniture, firewood and other wood products.

from 140 hours in September to 45 hours in December.

- *Literacy and numeracy skills*—Many employees had experienced difficulty doing fundamental calculations and reading staff memos and bulletins. The ALS Coach was instrumental in improving this situation.

To quote the General Manager:

The ALS Coach has managed to prove to the individual employee-students that learning can be enjoyable, a point that failed to get across under the traditional educational system. As for Donny, needless to say he no longer has this problem. . . . I believe that education in the workplace has not only had a positive impact on the Company, but has also filled an educational void for our staff specifically, and potentially for young people in general.[5]

In September 1982, the York Board established a new adult day school offering basic education, upgrading, and English as a second language. Because of the success of the experimental program, the education in the workplace concept has now been extended to York Wood Works, an industry recycling waste wood. Future plans include the establishment of a building renovation business known as Mount Dennis Developments and a clerical/retail service enterprise, A+ Business Services, to provide temporary employees for local companies, agencies, and government offices. All of these business ventures operate on a not-for-profit basis, drawing financial support from Employment & Immigration Canada, public and private donations, and the sale of goods and services.

Current data indicate that, of every five students beginning grade 9 in Toronto, only two will finish grade 12. It may be that the focus for the preparation of youth in the 1980s has already shifted from formal schooling to employment-related experience. However, in these difficult economic times, employment opportunities continue to be limited or nonexistent.

The integration of the job creation initiatives with on-the-job education services of the sort provided by the Academic and Life Skills Coach represents an innovative way to improve the learning skills of individuals who have not benefited from formal schooling.

Some may view this approach as a radical departure from traditional patterns of education in our industrialized society; however, education in the workplace, bringing together social and economic ideals, has been shown to be successful in developing countries in improving literacy and employment skills. Perhaps it's time we gave it a bigger try in Canada. ☐

Notes

1. Audrey M. Thomas, *Adult Basic Education and Literacy Activities in Canada* (Toronto: World Literacy of Canada, 1976).
2. Carman St. John-Hunter & David Harman, *Adult Illiteracy in the U.S.: Report to Ford Foundation* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).
3. Paul Kelaher, *Education in the Workplace Report* (Toronto: York Board of Education, January 11, 1982).
4. Debbie Long, *Education in the Workplace Report*.
5. Debbie Long, *Education in the Workplace Report*.

Oxford

UNIQUE IN

Morris Carter,
D. M. Sutherland Senior Public School,
Woodstock

The original idea to designate one of Oxford County's rural schools as a museum school was proposed by Brian Rice, principal of North Norwich Public School. His idea became a reality in 1974, when the Oxford County Board officially approved the preservation of Burgessville School, a two-room school built in 1905, and Brian Rice became its first principal, adding this new old school to his responsibilities. The position is now held by Reg Cartmale, who is also principal of North Norwich Public School near by.

Burgessville School is unique in a number of ways. First, it is operated, financed, and staffed on a cooperative basis by Oxford County's Elementary Principals' Association and its board of education. The board provides staffing and maintains the building and grounds. The principals finance the collection of artifacts, assist in preparing the curriculum, and organize the museum and its activities.

Second, although other museum schools exist in Ontario, none that we are aware of provides an educational experience tailored to a specific period in history. At the Oxford County Museum School, classes may go to the teaching room and actually experience a day in the life of a student in 1890.

△ *Writing with a quill pen at an open house. The old desk was made in Waterloo, Ontario.*
▽ *Experimenting with antique stamping equipment.*

County's Museum School

On class visits, which usually take a day, the students are divided into groups and spend some time both in the teaching room and in the museum room, which houses artifacts from all eras of our educational past. The Museum School teacher, Marie Avey, plans the program with the classroom teacher so as to integrate the experience into the curriculum.

Proposals and policies for operating and guiding this facility are presented by an advisory committee composed of the school's professional staff, principals, board members, and a senior administrator. Their recommendations are taken to the board.

Donations were initially obtained from all communities in the county through canvasses organized by the principal of each elementary school. As the last one- and two-room rural schools were closed, their storerooms and closets were searched for such items as old texts and teaching aids for the museum room. A committee of elementary principals continue to keep an active lookout for suitable items at flea markets, antique shows, and shops, as well as at auction sales.

The museum room is organized at present by subject title—for example, art, mathematics. The writing area is perhaps the most complete. On exhibit is an excellent collection of old ink bottles, pens, pencils, and slates. The workbooks date from before Queen Victoria's time to the present, and include a good collection from the Second World War. Children's games and toys from times gone by rank high with the students who visit the museum room. The collection of old audiovisual aids also attracts the interest of teachers, both young and old.

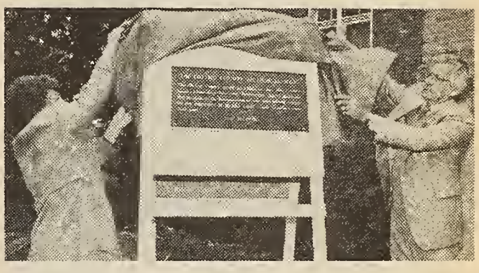
◁ *A display of old toys at Christmas 1980 Open House.*

A major objective of the school, in addition to the teaching and viewing aspects already outlined, is to provide a repository for old educational documents, pictures, teaching contracts, minute books, and so forth. These will then be readily available for research.

Government-supported Summer Experience Programs provided student researchers for the task of compiling histories of schools in every municipal area of the county. These educational histories are now complete and available in slide and tape form for use by any responsible community group. One set of these histories is located in the Museum School, and an appropriate 30-minute section is often used when a Women's Institute, couples club, or church group plan an evening visit.

The official opening in 1976 featured a county-wide history fair in which over thirty elementary schools participated. Since then, numerous special events have been planned and promoted, not only for their individual merit, but also to publicize and keep awareness of the facility at a high level.

A special event in 1977 was the decoration of the school in old-time Christmas fasion and a display of historical toys from a private collection. This event was so popular that it has been repeated (with variations) each year since.



Brian Rice, the museums school's first principal, and Mrs. Dickson of the school Board unveil a dedicatory plaque.

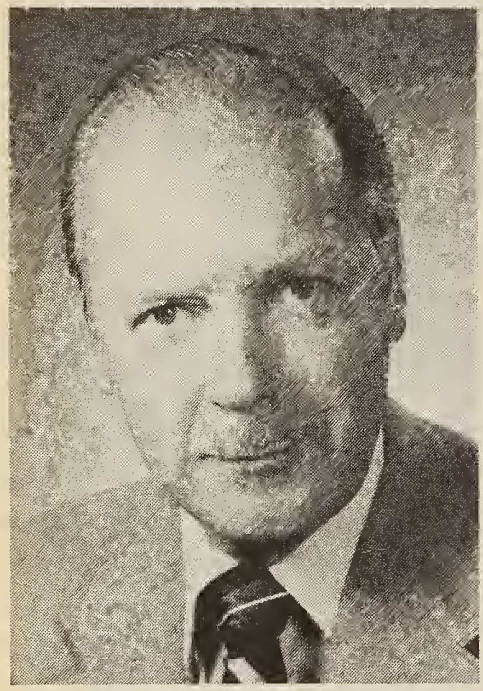
In 1979 a family activity for an autumn afternoon featured hot steamed corn on the cob and fresh apple cider. A real old-fashioned steam engine did the steaming, and a demonstration of early corn-planting and harvesting equipment drew the attention of a large crowd.

The 1980 International Plowing Match found the Museum School in active attendance at the region's Historical Building, where classes using materials, lessons, and dress for the period were conducted each day. The students and their teacher were the star attraction.

As the years pass, the activities and emphasis of Oxford County's Museum School will undoubtedly evolve and change. Its collection of artifacts and documents can only continue to appreciate in value as well as significance, and a growing number of students will have had the opportunity to experience at first hand a vital part of our early educational history. In its objectives, its mode of operation, and its success, this museum school provides an excellent model for the development of similar schools elsewhere.□

Why not a Canadian Council on Education?

Norman Goble,
Canadian Teachers' Federation,
Ottawa



Norman Goble, Secretary General of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, is our latest contributor to **Orbit's** *series of articles on distinguished educators.*

An active participant in teachers' organizations since 1949, Dr. Goble is a well-known figure on the Canadian education scene. He has represented teachers on numerous national advisory committees and councils, and has served on a variety of government boards dedicated to the improvement of education and education policy.

His published works include **Half a Revolution: Aspects of Change in the Canadian High School,** *published by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and* **The Changing Role of the Teacher,** *a Unesco-sponsored work available in Canada through OISE Press.*

Educational purposes seem to be even more confused at present than is usually the case. Perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at first principles.

We are born helpless and totally egocentric. With a bit of luck and some good guidance, most of us become reasonably competent adults with a fairly shrewd idea of where our interest lies and of the point at which prudence dictates that we make a compromise between autonomy and interdependence. All that takes place between those two stages is our education, and some of it happens in school.

Education is obviously the most natural of activities, in that it is the most unavoidable. Nature does not, however, provide a very adequate model. Nature favors the survival of species, and nothing more. Plants are programmed to react to their environment in ways that contribute to the collective survival. Animals are programmed to learn so to act.

Human beings mess things up by their ability to transmit a record of observed cause and effect, and therefore to predict and create. They do not simply react to their environment: they act *upon* it. The need to cope with self-induced change increasingly dominates the human agenda.

Notwithstanding that complication, human education begins, and even in the most sophisticated societies still rests upon, fidelity to the natural imperative. Communities, nations, and even Canadian provinces—which as everyone knows represent the holiest and most noble of political concepts—attempt to transmit to their young those taboos which restrain destructive behavior, the skills which promote collective survival, and the mythology which should inspire them to wish to use the good skills and respect the taboos. In other words, education is essentially a collective imperative, a public activity. Children are (let us hope) an eternally renewable resource, which it is necessary to harness to the goal of collective survival. No one, surely, can quarrel with that. If we fail in that undertaking, nothing else is left to us.

But at this point the questions begin. How do we translate these imperatives into workable school programs? How sure are we that in our current policies the taboos are sound, the mythology valid, the skills appropriate? How sure can we be that the institutions of education are sensitive to the fact that human beings act upon their environment, rather than simply reacting to it, and that the taboos and the mythology therefore need constant revision? Do our schools and their programs recognize that young people will need skills and a mythology, not to conform to what is, but to change their world in desirable ways?

School is a place of encounter between the institutionalized adult and the young (and it may be noted in passing that, in our culture, youth also has been institutionalized to a deplorable degree). Some antagonism is inevitable. When we set about educating young people we are beginning to transfer our power to those who will supplant us—an event that in our inner minds we can scarcely welcome or wish to hasten. How much of what takes place in school is an acting out of the subconscious adult fear of being displaced—Creon punishing Antigone, seeking stability, seeking to conserve the old ways, to protect the old truths from question? For that matter, how much is simply a perpetuation of that which has been found to be feasible, either practically or politically?

Granted that the collective purpose is, and must be, predominant, there remains the problem of free will. It is a problem that we should be grateful for—the efforts of totalitarian governments to eliminate it as a factor in educational planning have not enhanced the quality of life in their countries. But it *is* a problem. If we respect the freedom of the will, we must concede that people have the right, having been instructed in the taboos and mythology of the society they live in and offered access to useful skills, to reject the lot and, if they so choose, head off to hell in a handcart. We may feel aggrieved at their refusal to join the common effort, but there are limits to our right to coerce them.

So how do we define legitimate compulsion in education?

Some kind of a trade-off is indicated. I suggest that there are three necessary elements in it. The first is the obligation that rests upon society to provide truly effective exposure to a program of education—effective, that is, in the truest and fullest sense, in terms of equality of access to the possibility of successful learning, of responsiveness of the methodology to the individuality of the student, and of the quality of the learning environment. The second is the obligation to ensure that the program rests upon taboos, skills, and myth which are demonstrably appropriate and clearly relevant to the context of the student's future life. The third is the obligation to ensure that on the way to internalizing the goals that the school promotes, and mastering the skills needed to pursue them, the student will experience a satisfying degree of self-development and self-realization. Only then can we properly ask for an engagement of the individual will in the pursuit of the collective interest.

The public interest requires the maintenance of a powerful *public* school system—necessarily public, because only a universally accessible public system can make a reliable commitment to doing its best for all children, without discrimination or elitist preference, whatever their origin, their difficulties, or their initial handicap. Central to the maintenance of that commitment is a clear and consistent philosophy, applied through an ongoing process of curriculum revision—continuous, open, and subject to public scrutiny and debate.

But how, in Canada, do the fundamental questions even get asked, let alone answered? How can we improve the interface between philosophy and curricular policy?

Debate is hampered in Canada by the tradition of provincial authoritarianism, which fears the open exchange of opinion as a threat to the government monopoly of control over policy. As a result, educational policies are singularly vulnerable to single-issue pressure groups, political expediency, and the damage done by intergovernmental power plays.

There is no lack of talent, philosophical vision, or creative skill in this country. What is needed in our far-flung and compartmentalized national community is a clearing house for information, a forum for exchange of ideas, a source of comment with the kind of prestige in the educational world that the Economic Council of Canada or the Conference Board has in economic matters, a think-tank where Canadian imperatives can be translated into workable suggestions for educational priorities.

The process of curriculum revision is impaired by lack of public understanding, political distortion, superficiality, a chronic disjuncture between goals and practicalities, and a lack of opportunity for the many legitimate interest groups to argue their case. A national forum for high-level discussion of policy issues would not solve all problems, but it might help. Sponsored (as it should be) by the Council of Ministers of Education, it might even change the image of that body from negative defensiveness to leadership in the search for valid goals and effective policies. ☐

The Canada Studies Foundation – A Successful Experiment in Curriculum Development

Robert M. Anderson,
Canada Studies Foundation

Classroom teachers, working together across cultural and regional boundaries, are in the best position to make judgments about adapting Canadian studies to age/grade level of students, about course organization, about methods of teaching, and about suitability of learning materials; in these areas, the Foundation wishes to see the creativity of teachers given full rein. The Foundation contends that the shared creativity of teachers throughout Canada, supported by expertise beyond the classroom, offers the greatest promise of improvement in civic education in the schools of Canada; the Foundation sees activities to facilitate this sharing as an essential feature of Canadian studies throughout Canada.[1]

The above statement, from the Canada Studies Foundation's newsletter, *Contact* (April 1976), sums up a basic premise on which all the Canada Studies Foundation's work has been based. Ever since its incorporation in 1970 as an independent, non-profit organization, the Foundation has dedicated itself to improving the quality of Canadian studies in elementary and secondary schools across the country.

With the help of ongoing financial assistance from the Department of the Secretary of State, the Foundation has developed a bilingual information service and maintained a fully bilingual operation providing assistance to educators across the country. It has organized local, provincial, and national workshops, and provided resource personnel to them. But by far the major part of its effort has gone into teacher-centred curriculum development. There is probably no other organization, either in Canada or abroad, that has enlisted so many teachers and students from such a widespread geographical area in developing resources for teachers and classroom use.

The Foundation's distinctiveness is based on six "positions of principle," also set down in the same issue of *Contact:*

1. that the goal of the study of Canada should be an understanding of the major issues and questions facing Canadians;

2. that its energies and resources should be directed primarily to classroom teachers (and student teachers), wherever appropriate in close collaboration with their students;

3. that teachers and students should receive support from the personnel and resources of universities, school boards, departments of education, community agencies, professional associations of teachers, and all other willing individuals and groups;

4. that teachers must be afforded opportunities to obtain a comprehensive view of Canada and to understand the varying viewpoints of people in Canada;

5. that improvements in courses of study, in learning/teaching materials, and in methods of teaching are necessary to bring about significant improvement of civic education in Canada's schools;

6. that the Foundation can only demonstrate ways and means of improving civic education in Canada's schools; improvement on the desired scale will only be realized when schools in Canada generally incorporate changes proposed by the Foundation.[2]

Over the years, the implementation of these positions of principle has taken different forms, but the Foundation's goals and its modus operandi have remained constant: to foster in our young people an understanding of Canada as a whole through the development of resources for teaching by the individuals most knowledgeable about classroom needs — the teachers themselves.

The Early Years

In its first five years, from 1970 to 1975, more than 700 educators and over 8500 students from every level of education and province participated in three very large projects sponsored by the Foundation. In its next three years, from 1975 to 1978, the Foundation extended its reach to the Yukon and Northwest Territories, completing ten additional projects with the help of 400 educators and their students. A significant product of these Foundation-sponsored activities was the preparation and distribution of over eighty volumes of learning materials — more than fifty of which were published commercially.

Another major outgrowth of the Foundation's activities in these early years was the development of comprehensive guidelines for strengthening Canadian studies programs. These were published by OISE Press in 1978, under the title *Teaching Canada for the '80s*. The authors, A. B. Hodgetts and Paul Gallagher, formulated their ideas on the basis of direct input from educators across the country, and their work has provided the rationale for the current direction of the Foundation's activities.

The Present Decade

Since 1979, the Canada Studies Foundation's developmental work has focussed on four broad themes enunciated in *Teaching Canada for the '80s*—Canada's environment, its political system, its economic system, and public issues.

The major pan-Canadian thrust of the Foundation is now being carried forward through the projects of seven teams of educators working in regional "centres" that stretch from the Maritimes to British Columbia. It is their responsibility to plan and develop instructional materials and resources that have potential for utilization in provincial programs, and to extend their activities as widely as possible, both geographically and within the education system. Their activities include, among other things, a materials development program and a seminar program for teachers and curriculum developers.

In the initial phase of each centre's activities, the focus was on the development of sub-themes. Some centres chose, near the beginning, to extend their work into the development of prototype instructional materials in cooperation with teachers and curriculum specialists, but most concentrated their initial efforts on the preparation of resource guides for teachers that contained both an academic and a pedagogic component.

In the phase now under way, instructional materials that logically continue this work are in the course of preparation. The work of each centre differs somewhat, being governed mainly by the theme on which the centre is focussing its activities and by the grade levels targeted for materials and professional development. In British Columbia, for example, the focus is on teaching public issues at the secondary level, whereas in Manitoba it is on teaching politics in grades 5 through 12. Following is a list of the centres and highlights of their current activities:

- *University of British Columbia*/Teaching Public Issues
Development of secondary level student units related to four themes discussed in a previously developed teacher resource, *Teaching Public Issues in a Canadian Context*. The themes are Quality of Life, Multicultural Canada, Canada and Global Issues, and Canada's Relations with the United States.

- *University of Manitoba*/Teaching Politics
The development of student materials to implement curricula for grades 5 through 12.

- *Trinity College School (Ontario)*/Teaching Economics
The continued development of secondary level student materials to supplement economics and social science courses. This centre previously developed a student text titled *Canada's Economy—An Activity Approach*, and an accompanying teacher's guide.

- *Frontenac County Board of Education (Ontario)*/Canadian Studies for the Elementary Grades
The development of teacher and student materials for grades 4 to 6. The model for this project is *The Dynamic Community: A Teacher's Resource Guide*, which this centre previously developed for teaching Canadian studies in grades 1 to 3.

- *The Ontario Association for Geographic and Environmental Education*/Teaching the Environment
The development of an inquiry-oriented unit for non-academic secondary school students. It will extend and expand the ideas put forward in *Teaching Canadian Geography: Building from Strength*, a teacher resource previously developed by this centre.

- *Université Laval (Quebec)*/Teaching the Environment and Teaching Public Issues
The development of a pedagogical atlas of Quebec. This centre previously developed four monographs on public issues: *Le Problème de l'énergie au Canada, Les Partis politiques au Canada, Le Canada dans le monde*, and *La Géographie et les élèves en difficulté d'apprentissage*.

- *Atlantic Canada*/Teaching the Environment
(This centre does not have a geographical location. It is made up of teachers located in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia). The development of student materials for junior and senior secondary schools. This group previously developed four academic monographs with a pedagogic component in cooperation with the Atlantic Institute of Education: *Canadians and Their Economy, Canada's Natural Resources, Canada and the Wider World*, and *Canada: A Land of Physical Diversity*.

Readers interested in obtaining publications resulting from the Foundation's current program may obtain them by sending a cheque or money order to the following sources:

Available from Publications Sales, OISE Press, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6.

Teaching Public Issues in a Canadian Context. 1982. Wilson, D. C. (ed.) ($19.50)

Canada's Economy: An Activity Approach. 1981. Jennings, W. E., Moffatt, P. C., & Staunton, E. G. ($10.75)

Canada's Economy: Teacher's Guide. 1982. Jennings, W. E., Moffatt, P. C., & Staunton, E. G. ($14.50)

Available from the Ontario Association for Geographic and Environmental Education, Box 438, Postal Station "O", Toronto, Ontario M4A 2P1.

Teaching Canadian Geography: Building From Strength. 1981. Andrew, W., et al. ($10.00)

Available from Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques, 339, rue Wilbrod, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6M4.

Les Partis politiques au Canada. 1981. Lafleur, G.-A., & Babin, A. ($4.50)

Le Problème de l'énergie au Canada—une approche géographique. 1981. Clibbon, P. C., & Babin, A. ($4.75)

Le Canada dans le monde. 1981. Grenier, F., & Babin, A. ($4.75)

La Géographie et les élèves en difficulté d'apprentissage. 1981. Giroux, A., Ireland, D., & Comtois, M. ($4.75)

Available from the Canada Studies Foundation, Suite 3-390, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V5.

The Dynamic Community: A Teacher's Resource Guide. 1982. Mansfield, B., & Anderson, R. M. ($3.50)

Aspects of the Canadian Environment Series (Lighthouse Publications, Halifax, N.S.)

Canadians and Their Economy: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow. 1982. Lesser B., & Roald, B. ($3.50)

Canada's Natural Resources and Their Use. 1982. Mandale, M., & Armstrong, M. B. ($3.50)

Canada and the Wider World: Ongoing External Influences in Canadian Development. 1982. Howell, C. D., & Redden, G. J. ($3.50)

Canada: A Land of Physical Diversity. 1982. Tomkins, D. ($3.50)

Books from the Political Education Project, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.

The Teaching of Politics: Some Suggestions for Teachers. 1982. Osborne, K. ($3.50)

Politics and You. 1982. Botting, D., et al. ($2.00) An illustrated activity approach to politics for students in grades 5 and 6.

The Green Slime Affair: A Political Play for Children. 1982. MacKay, D. ($1.00) A play that can be read or acted by children in grades 5 and 6.

Politics Is Simply a Public Affair. 1982. Baydock, E., et al. ($2.00) An illustrated activity approach for grades 9 to 12.

What Is Politics? 1982. Baydock, E., et al. ($2.00) An illustrated activity approach to politics from grades 9 to 12. □

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Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V5

A SHORT HISTORY OF EDUCATION

Wilf Wees,
OISE

Before his retirement to the West Coast some two years ago, Wilf Wees, one of **Orbit**'s *founding members and its continuing supporter, left an article with us for consideration.*

Too long to publish in its entirety, we have thought it timely to publish it here in part. Both witty and whimsical, it presents the singular viewpoint of one who participated in the dawning era of Hall-Dennis—an era now apparently supplanted by one of retrenchment.

Wilf Wees died this past year, at the age of 82, after a long and distinguished career as a publisher, writer, and "agent provocateur" in the field of education.

In the beginning was the beginning of a man, only he didn't know it. And he didn't know it until he could say, "I am a man." Then he knew he was not a monkey. And thereby hangs a tail.

Then he discovered that there was another man sort of creature, with variations. This man-creature could rib him like nobody's business, and he called her woo-man. The things she did to him tickled him half to death, and they had children.

Having children was a very fine thing, because he could cuff them around the way he couldn't cuff that woo-man around. This made him feel like a lion. Ever since he had lost his tail, he had wanted to be the king of beasts. But there was that lion. He couldn't fight the lion, man-to-man so to speak, but as a palliative to his ego he called himself lion-hearted, and he beat his children instead.

This brings us down through Roman times, when the beating-rods were just as important as the papyrus rolls in education—down to the nineteenth century. At the start of the nineteenth century, however, there was great progress made—in Roman times you beat knowledge into the kids; in the nineteenth century you beat the hell out of them. Beating the hell out of them created a kind of vacuum, and it was supposed that knowledge could easily be slipped in to fill the vacuum.

This change occurred in the first excitement about science, when scholars were trying to apply what the scientists knew about vacuums. This was also the time for the building of normal schools. They were called normal schools to differentiate them from all other schools, which, of course, were abnormal. The only difference was that, though both the abnormal schools and the normal schools accepted the vacuum theory, the normal schools said that you mustn't think that you had to *create* the vacuum by beating the hell out of the kids. You just assumed that the vacuum was there all the time. All that you had to do was to feed the kids the stuff in the right way and, because of the vacuum, they'd suck it in. Of course, if their vacuum tanks didn't happen to be working that day, you could still beat the hell out of them and create a vacuum anyway. Most teachers did.

> At the start of the nineteenth century... there was great progress made – in Roman times you beat knowledge into the kids; in the nineteenth century you beat the hell out of them.

Then, toward the end of the nineteenth century, another great change began. After all, the vacuum theory wasn't really a theory, just a sort of metaphor used to explain the inexplicable. Replacing this science fiction came real science—not at first a science of education but a science of psychology. Until then, psychology had

Westminster School, England c.1790

Education old style: Beating creates a vacuum into which some knowledge can be slipped.

been called mental philosophy, and the psychologists, who never had taken much to thinking anyway, found it a great relief to do scientific research—all they had to do now was to go fact finding, and they didn't have to think at all.

There were three psychologists who were later to have a tremendous influence on education.

The first was Ebbinghaus, who, working on memory, counted the number of repetitions it took to remember a list of nonsense syllables. Since most of the education of the time, so far as the child was concerned, consisted of memorizing nonsense syllables, you can see how closely Ebbinghaus's work was tied into education.

The other thing that Ebbinghaus did was to invent the completion test, and this gave Binet a fine head start on the measurement of intelligence, which was a great gift to education because now the youngster became demonstratively the scapegoat for the teacher's failure. All the teacher had to do was to give the kid an intelligence test and so prove that it was not the teacher but the child who didn't have the brains.

The second psychologist to have a great influence on education was the Russian, Pavlov. Pavlov invented the conditioned response. You will recall how Pavlov taught a dog to salivate when he rang a bell. And you can see why the concept of conditioning became such a marvellous boon to education. Since the conditioned response obviously bypassed the cerebral cortex, teachers felt completely justified in their practice of bypassing thinking in school.

But the great bypass came from John B. Watson, inventor of Behaviorism in psychology. Watson led education a long step further into the night. He reduced the mind to a muscle-twitch, completely ignoring not only thought but consciousness. I have often assumed that Watson must really have been trying to bring the mind of man down to the level of his own.

These three men have now led us well into the twentieth century, the Century of The Great Enlightenment.

And what they accomplished for education in trying to turn psychology into a science was to turn the child into a machine. "Hallelujah!," cried the psychologists. And a few years later the new education scientists (though, as always, a little slow in catching on to a very good thing) were to echo a loud "Amen."

The way in which mechanistic psychology brainwashed educators into mechanistic education came about this way: Quite early in the century, psychologists realized that if psychology was to be accepted as a science among the natural sciences it had to find a basic principle. A basic principle in natural science is the assumption that change is motion. Newton had enunciated the laws of motion for the scientists; and some learned scientist, probably feeling sorry about the flounderings of these would-be scientists, must have told the psychologists about Newton, because somewhere along in the second decade we find psychology laying down Newton's third law of motion as their own.

The third law states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The psychologists said that in human beings they would call the action a stimulus and the reaction a response. Thus, if I punch a man, that's the stimulus which produces an equal and opposite reaction—he punches me back. Of course, if he has been properly conditioned, then the equal and opposite reaction will be to turn the other cheek.

As soon as this proclamation was posted, the psychologists all gathered around, chattering like magpies—"stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response" was all that most of them could say, and about all that many of them have been saying ever since. Among them was E. L. Thorndike.

Thorndike immediately saw the implications for education. Actually, he could move the stimulus-response theory right over, holus-bolus, into education, and thereby make his fame and fortune. And he wouldn't have to change education a particle. All that he had to do was to make universal practice scientific.

> During the last fifty years we have seen more nonsense promugated as the science of education than all the medicine men in all the jungles created in the million years of paleolithic man.

The procedure was simple. You took a stimulus and told the child the response he was supposed to make. Then, applying the homely truism that practice makes perfect, you kept banging in the stimulus at him to produce the response over and over. This process Thorndike called the Law of Exercise—too blind, poor dear, to see that the only person really getting exercise was the teacher. At each bang-bang of the stimulus, if you got the response you wanted you smiled at the child and said "good"; and if you didn't get the response you wanted, you frowned and kept him in after school for more banging. This he called the Law of Effect, known in the folklore of the race as reward and punishment.

Because Thorndike had now restated ancient truisms in scientific jargon, he had the beginning of a science. To make the laws really scientific, he even had a theory about how they worked. Between the nerve that carried the stimulus and the nerve that produced the response is a hiatus called a synapse. By bang-banging with his stimuli, he destroyed the resistance at the synapse, and then his law of effect went to work to knit the two tails of the nerves together. When this happened, *zip* went the flash along the stimulus nerve, *zip* came the response, and learning was complete. Flashcards were one of Thorndike's zip-zip inventions.

He still hadn't a science, however. To be a real scientist, he thought, you had to be able to count, and to count you had to have something to count. Since you can't count all the stimuli that are banged at the kids in school or all the responses, what you do is to forget the kids entirely (they're only little pieces of machinery anyway) and instead sample the stimuli at random, correlate stimuli and responses, set up systems of standard deviations, probable errors, T squares, and what-not, and now you really had a science of education.

As a consequence, during the last fifty years we have seen more nonsense promulgated as the science of education than all the medicine men in all the jungles created in the million years of paleolithic man.

The one forward step that we have taken in this post-Thorndikian period is to admit that ideas have some relevance to one another. Even Thorndike, in his last book just before he died, admitted that the one-to-one correspondence between stimulus and response was not exactly true. By a hook-or-by-crook that he didn't understand, the incoming and outgoing nerves and their synapses got tangled up and produced some sort of connectedness among themselves. This admission of relevance among ideas led us into the disciplinary approach to teaching.

Unfortunately, however, we still hung on to the fundamentalist doctrines of "the old-time religion" and preached "the faith of our fathers, holy faith." In school we called this holy faith Academic Excellence. Academic excellence is the ability on the part of young people faithfully to reproduce the content of the stale knowledge stored in textbooks or in the tired old brains of school teachers and university professors.

In spite of the *new* enlightenment, we still adhere to the old-time religion in 95 percent of our classrooms, and this is mainly why the kids are kicking over the traces. Some of them kick themselves free and we call them dropouts. So many others of them, poor youngsters, just get tangled up in the harness.

The new enlightenment isn't very bright yet. I don't think we have even seen the light; just the dawn. The reason that I call it new is that the current happening in education happened only once before in recorded history. It happened nearly 2500 years ago—the cause of, the result of, or simply concurrent with the Golden Age of Greece. What happened then is almost exactly what is happening now. In schools such as those of Isocrates and Socrates, the young were not only permitted but encouraged and guided to think things out for themselves.

For us, what a difference! It seems that at last we educators are about to admit that children are people and will permit them to join the human race.

The Thorndikian era might be called, as previously implied, the machine age in education. A major concept of the machine age was called adjustment. The teacher tightened up a loose nut here, gave a twist to a little set-screw there, and the child, completely adjusted, left school a perfect little robot. The fact that within a year the child had jarred all the nuts and screws loose again so that essential pieces of the robot mechanism started falling out didn't seem to make much difference to educational thinking. The school's technicians had done their part, and certainly they undertook to provide no lifetime guarantee for the work.

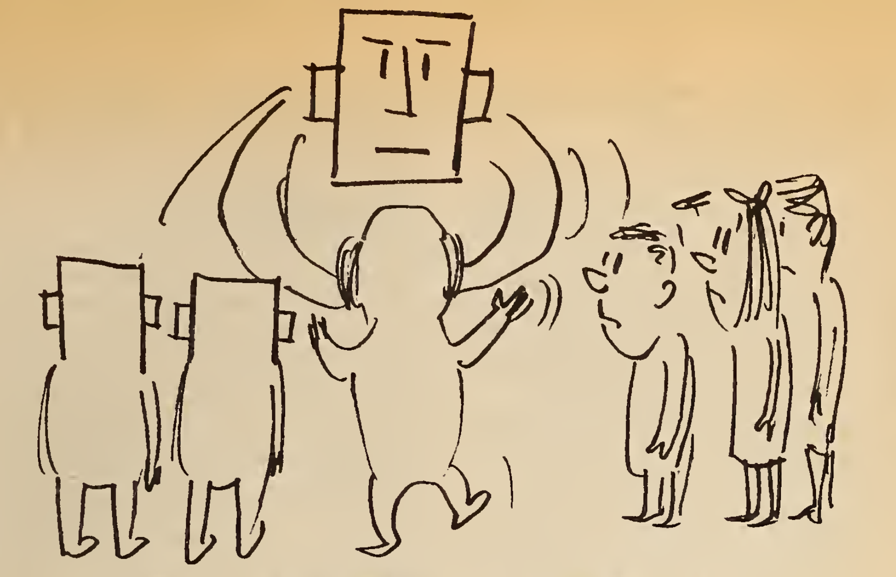
Because of the failure of the adjustment concept to tie together all the bits and pieces of the stimulus-response learnings, the education mechanics, shortly after the war, suddenly hit upon quite a simple way to hold all the bits and pieces together — they would fit them together to form a strong, rigid structure. Then all that they would have to do would be to squeeze the child's mind into the structure and they had it made. Nothing could fall apart, neither the structure nor the kid inside. These structures are the disciplines—mathematics, reading, physics, biology, even music.

This is the sort of thing that mechanistic thinking is bound to do. The fact that the education scientists were switching their emphasis from Dynamics to Statics in their mechanistic thinking was of small difference: they were still consistently adhering to Newton's three laws of motion.

With the structural concept now well ensconced behind their high brows, university professors went to work all over North America prefabricating those disciplinary structures. Many of them were advertised as teacher-proof, so that all that the schools had to do was to buy a carload, distribute them to the youngsters, and then force the youngsters to force themselves into them.

Proliferation of these prefab manufacturing industries received a tremendous impetus when psychologists like Jerome Bruner pointed out that you could make these prefabs in a variety of sizes—to fit little minds, medium-sized minds, and big minds. With such an expansion of the product mix, it wasn't long before the book manufacturing plants were six months behind in filling orders for textbook publishers' prefabs.

Then came the ultimate product of structural rigidity in mechanized education, programmed learning, processed first by the teaching machine and now by the computer.



Education in the machine age: Turning out perfect little robots. The only problem is that the screws work loose.

by Pavel Rak,OISE

Then came the ultimate product of structural rigidity in mechanized education, programmed learning, processed first by the teaching machine and now by the computer. As you might expect, programmed learning was invented by a Behavioristic psychologist, again confusing the minds of us naive educators by findings from psychological study of the bright minds of rats or pigeons.

These two forces from the educational machine age are still with us, and their proponents, backed by literally billions of dollars, are hell-bent on the continued mechanization of childhood. And unless we educators can start doing some powerful thinking of our own to turn ourselves into masters in our own house, we are going to continue living in our sad history for a long time yet.

Man lives his history, of course; he has to because he is always on the forward edge of it. But living history on the forward edge of it is a lot different from living in it. Living in it, one can see only the past, can do only what has been done; the past is all that there is ahead. On the leading edge, you keep a toehold on the past but your reach is to the future.

For education, the switch from the past to the future should be very easy. All we have to do is turn our heads. When we do turn our heads from the past to see the future, we find ourselves looking straight into the eyes of a child. The future of the human race is its children; and with this discovery, children all of a sudden become people.

When we do see the child as a person, we no longer think of him in terms of the various mechanistic metaphors with which we have tagged him—a vacuum tank to be filled up, a machine to be adjusted, or a plastic organic substance to be moulded in the shape of the structure of a discipline. Instead, we see the mind of the child as a force, a power, generating its own energy, ordering and reordering its own world as it not only creates and recreates its own future but as it will create the future of humankind.

With this view of the child, education takes on an entirely different meaning, a meaning almost exactly the opposite of that which it has enjoyed so thoroughly throughout time.

According to the old definition, it was the function of education to mould the child's mind into the kind of mind that society demanded that it should be—a passive, accepting, conforming mind, comfortable and easy to live with. (In Grandma's words, such a child "don't give no trouble to nobody.") The opposite of passive is active, the opposite of accepting is creative, the opposite of conforming is unique. The new definition thus requires education to assist the child to be and to become his own active, eager, alert and creative self, not adjusting to change but creating it, not simply enduring and coping with change but controlling and directing it, thus building the future into himself and himself into the future. (In Grandma's words, "He makes a danged nuisance of hisself!")

Now if we are to adopt this sort of thinking about education (and many people are working and thinking hard toward its adoption), we ought to be systematic about it. Some of the consequences of our practices of the old definition were helter-skelter courses of study, helter-skelter teaching, and, naturally, helter-skelter learning—when there was any learning at all. One fears that many of the attempts to adopt the new definition, even now, are rather helter-skelter tryouts of innovations for no other reason than that they are new.

To be systematic in our thinking, we must set out as clearly and explicitly as we can the assumptions on which we base our thinking. When a set of assumptions are as relevant to one another, as internally consistent as we can make them, we call that set of assumptions an hypothesis.

Taking considerable liberty with the

minds of my readers (a liberty that you will no doubt say I have already used generously), I would like to set out an hypothesis that I have found helpful in keeping my own thinking on track. I do so in the hope that it may be useful to some of you.

Our basic assumption deals with the nature of change. We start with change because it was at this point, the point of departure, that the science of education got off on the wrong foot. Natural science says, and ever since long before Aristotle always has said, that change is motion. Descartes, Newton, and many others vowed that any other kind of change was unthinkable. And in education, as long as we think of teaching as the transmission of knowledge, whether by Thorndike's laws of learning or by imposition of Bruner's disciplinary structures, we are implicitly and explicitly accepting the assumption that the laws of natural science are applicable to children.

> As long as we think of teaching as the transmission of knowledge... we are implicitly and explicitly accepting the assumption that the laws of natural science are applicable to children... Children are not stones.

I can't and I don't. Children are not stones.

In spite of Descartes there *is* another kind of thinkable change. Aristotle introduced it and said that it had nothing to do with motion. He called it generation. Nobody has ever paid much attention to generation as a kind of change, except John Locke, who called it twaddle. In reply to John Locke, let me ask four questions:

1. Can anybody but the child perceive for him?

2. Can anybody but the child turn his own perceptions into ideas?

3. Can anybody but the child relate his ideas to create concepts?

4. Can anybody but the child give to his ideas and concepts that order and form which he creates by that incredibly complicated process that we call thought?

As answers to these rhetorical questions, I quote Kahlil Gibran, from his poem *The Children:*

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

Perhaps, now, we can be explicit about our set of assumptions:

1. The mind is a force, a power—not a tank to be filled, not a machine to be adjusted, not a plastic, organic substance to be moulded into the shape of a disciplinary structure.

2. The mind is a self-generating power. The child's own mind creates its own power and, except by fracturing its housing, nobody can take its power away.

3. The mind generates its power (*a*) by perceiving relationships among all the things it can sense around about, (*b*) by relating its perceptions to form ideas, (*c*) by relating ideas to form concepts, generalizations, abstractions, or whatever one may wish to call them, (*d*) by putting percepts, ideas, and concepts into some kind of shape and order that makes sense to the mind.

4. The process of relating perceptions, ideas, concepts, ordering them and reordering them, goes on all the time the child is awake, and we call the process thought.

5. Although by taking thought we may not be able to add one cubit to our stature, only by taking thought does the child add energy (watts upon kilowatts, say) to the power of his mind.

6. In the light of these assumptions, the function of education can be stated in only one way—(*a*) to help the child find direction for the exercise and development for his thinking; (*b*) to help him discover ways of thinking that may best facilitate and accelerate his growth in thinking power.

7. The substance upon which the child's mind works to nourish its power of thought we nowadays call the resources of the school. The child himself is, of course, his own most effective resource. Beyond himself the child may find the following school resources — and I list them in order of importance to the child:
a) all the other children;
b) the teacher;
c) both the natural and the man-made world *outside* the school;
d) within the school, representational resources such as pictures (either still or moving) and models, and symbolic resources such as the child may find in the various ways in which the printed word may be packaged.

When you go into a school or a workroom of a school where these assumptions are completely operative, what you see is a kind of miracle. At least it seems like a miracle to anyone who has lived with the military routines of Canadian schools and classrooms during the last sixty years.

The first impression is one of an activity far more intense than that of the aimless freedom of the playground at recess. On second look you discover that what you are looking at is industry. Then, as you move around among the work people, you find that this is not an industry in the modern sense of the assembly line; this is a roomful of cottage industries, every child his own craftsman. The work centres may be staffed by one person, two, three, five, or even more, depending on the staffing needs.

But what the children are fashioning, whatever the number who may be operating the work centre, are ideas and ways in which ideas may be put together to raise the potential of their personal powers of thought. The product of our workshop is that ineffable radiation force that Aquinas called "the light of the intellect." In a work centre of four nine-year-olds whom I visited once, the children's minds were bouncing with the excitement of a new invention. They had just that moment fashioned the concept of infinity.

Not the least, probably the most, profoundly gratifying experiences that we enjoy in the workroom come from the personalities of the children. This is the self-confidence of the free mind, the sense of personal responsibility to achieve goals, the eagerness to keep going, the helpfulness to one another, the sincere, unaffected politeness of the children, and, perhaps most deeply moving, the honest appraisal and evaluation of their own work and that of others.

To such children as these I gladly entrust the future—their own future and what is left of mine.

This is a very foreshortened account of the application and implementation of our first five assumptions. What of our assumptions, numbers six and seven, regarding the function of education?

We have not seen the teacher in our workroom yet, and as a matter of fact I have been in workshops in which I have had to ask some small child to help me find the teacher. When I did find him, he was doing one of two types of things: he was either getting together resources from which children might choose what they needed next to think about, or he was recording his observations and assessments of the children's progress in cognitive power, child by child. In the first case, he was carrying out the first function that we laid down — to help the children find direction for the exercise and development of their thinking. In the second instance, he was working on the second function, appraising progress in order to figure out how best to facilitate it further.

When we do find the teacher among his children, we find him making notes in his mind for recording later; mainly he just looks and listens, or by a smile, a nod, a pat on the head, applauds. When he does talk, he does so usually by invitation, responding to some child's very personal need, or as a student among his students, going to work with them to see if he can help them over a hump in the path of their thinking. In either case, the teacher is the helping hand, the servant not the master of his children. □

Misapplication of Microcomputers in Education

Ronald G. Ragsdale,
OISE

The following article is reprinted from OISE's Field Development Newsletter *(Vol. 12, No. 5, January 1982). Although there is some overlap of readership between the* Newsletter *and* Orbit, *we feel that the information in this article would be of interest to the wider* Orbit *audience.*

Our educational practices are strongly shaped by our assumptions, usually implicit, including both our group assumptions and individual ones. They include our expectations about what students will have learned before reaching a certain level, what they can learn in a fixed period of time, and what factors external to the student—such as materials, mode of presentation and classroom structure—will influence learning.

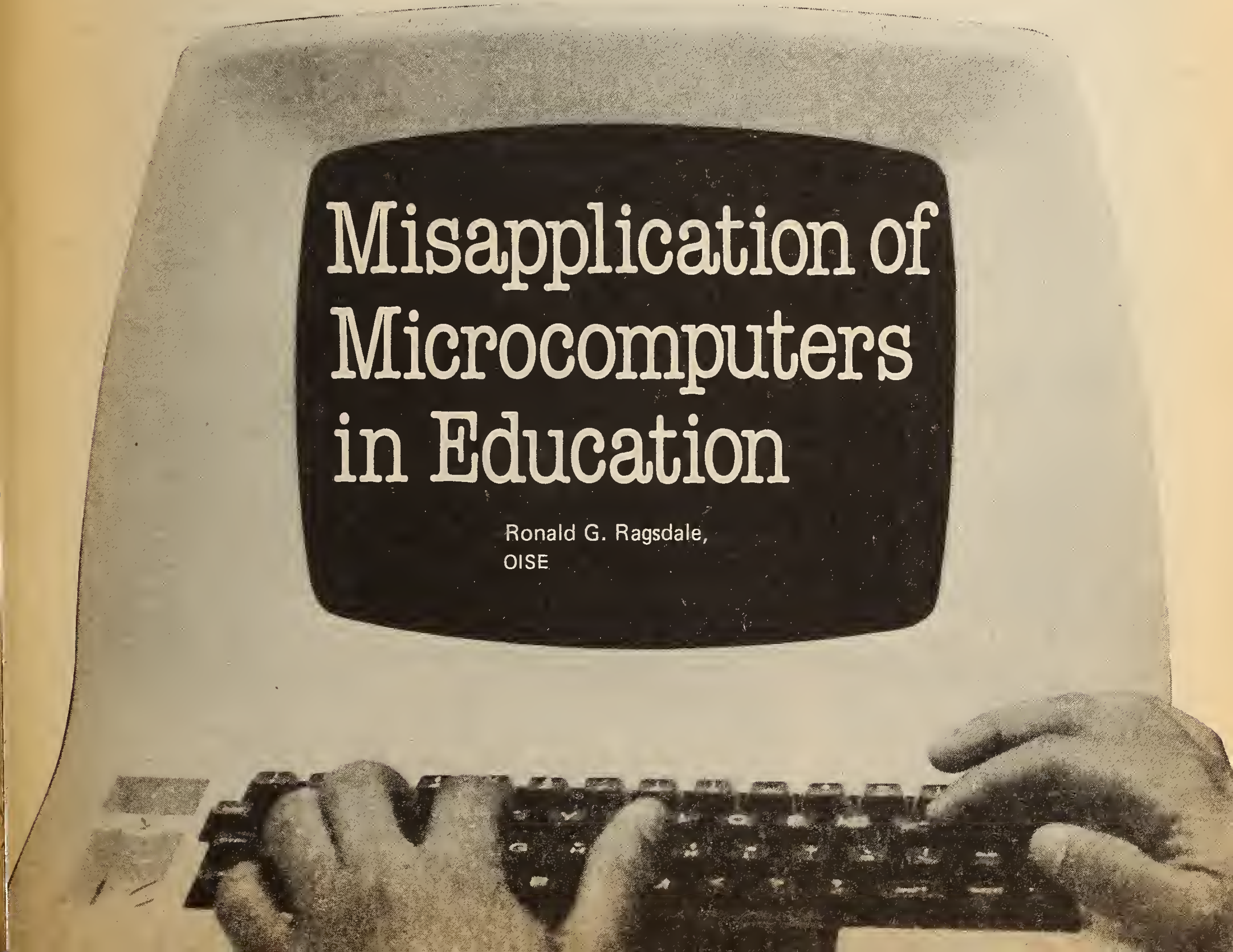
The topic of discussion at this point, however, is not the general role of assumptions, but the specific role that assumptions play in the application of computers to education. The following is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of all possible assumptions, but rather a relatively short consideration to increase the sensitivity of the reader to some of the more important ones.

The Law of the Hammer

Many of our assumptions regarding the use of computers are not explicit. One of these assumptions operates in a manner similar to the "Law of the Hammer," which has been around for many years. The statement of the law is (roughly) "If you give a hammer to a two-year old, suddenly a lot of things will need hammering." If you change "hammer" to "computer," "two-year old" to "educator," and "hammering" to "computing," you have a description of the effect. (Also appropriate are the words to the song "If I had a hammer.")

Many people like working with computers and, myself included, they try to find new uses for computers. The assumption in education sometimes seems to be that an educational practice will be improved if it is done by a computer, or that something which is not worth doing will become valuable if done by computer.

Another consequence of indiscriminate computer application is that some people promise that computers will do tasks which are impossible. In the early 1960s, possibly before, and certainly since, proponents of computer-assisted instruction (CAI) promised "The computer can select the instructional sequence that is most appropriate for each student" or more glowing words to that effect. This statement is only true if you restrict your consideration to the capability required of the computer. However, within this statement is the assumption that different students require different types of materials, sequences, etc., which is currently being argued under the heading of Aptitude-Treatment Interaction and is still in dispute (see Ragsdale, 1980). The statement also assumes that instructional material exists in a sufficient variety of formats, strategies, etc., which is not true. Finally, the statement assumes that there is a validated algorithm for



matching students with instructional sequences, which there is not.

The faulty promise of CAI might be viewed as a conflict between the idea (or design) and the implementation. The preceding should not be interpreted as a claim that CIA has failed, but that its proponents promised more than could be delivered (and some are still doing it). The probable reason for this is that the problem is simple from the computing point of view but extraordinarily difficult from an instructional design point of view, and the people making the statements are not instructional designers.

Consequences of the Hammer

One of the consequences of searching for ways to use computers has been a tendency to build from computer strengths rather than to build toward student weaknesses. A special case of this is our tendency to use computers for the instruction of skills which have become less important because of computers and other electronic technology, such as calculators. The reason, no doubt, is because it is easier to construct CAI lessons for tasks which computers can do very well.

The discipline in which the greatest number of CAI programs exists is mathematics, particularly arithmetic skills. Not that mathematics and arithmetic skills are unimportant, but it is certainly becoming less important for students to master rapid computational skills. It is therefore something of an anachronism, and an illustration of the point being made, that a recently developed microcomputer CAI package (which is extremely well done in terms of instructional strategy) should be a set of lessons covering long division. Again, this is not to say that an understanding of, and a capability for, long division are unimportant, but that the necessity to become skilled at long division is decreasing.

It is possible that similar comments will be made about other skill areas in the future. For example, the use of spelling correction programs within word-processing systems may make spelling skills *less* important as the availability of word-processing systems increases. There are some who might argue that spelling skills (or arithmetic skills) are fundamental to a good education, but as Haefner (1981) points out, the value of an education to a student is going to depend on the acquisition of skills which the computer has not acquired.

Assumptions in Computer Applications

In addition to the assumptions made about the use of computers in general, there are assumptions specific to particular kinds of applications. One of the application areas where this is particularly true is that of simulation games.

A simulation is a representation of some process, and the person designing the simulation has to decide which are the most important aspects of the process and how they should interact—that is, construct a mathematical model of the process. Often, however, the mathematical model may have relationships between variables that produce unanticipated and/or undesired behavior in users, particularly in simulation games. Weizenbaum (1980) relates that an MIT graduate student, while deeply engaged in a game, was heard to say, "We ought to get more points for killing than for merely surviving" (p. 442).

This anecdote is an example of an assumption about human behavior, made by the designer, the effects of which, although likely to be subtle, might be completely in opposition to what the designer desired. The previous example may be trivial, but the point being made also applies to situations where the stakes are higher.

The Chronology of Assumptions

To this point, only the initial assumptions about computer applications have been discussed. The first assumption is usually that a particular process would be "better" if it were computerized, while the second assumption (or set of assumptions) has to do with the design of the particular computer application. What might appear to be the end of the assumption-making process, however, is only the beginning of a continuing process, with the essential difference between the stages being that the assumptions made after the design stage are often implicit and more difficult to detect. These later assumptions may be called the assumptions of implementation, to distinguish them from those changes imposed by the assumptions of the user.

The implementation of the computer application is usually done by a person or persons other than the designer, so there is ample opportunity for misinterpretation if the communication channels are not excellent and used effectively. But misinterpretation is not the sole cause, and perhaps not the most important cause, of modification in the application. Many changes occur simply because the implementer must make specific decisions at a level of detail that is often overlooked by the designer(s).

For example, a school board might decide to implement a computerized system which will monitor the achievement of all elementary school students on a set of core objectives. The implementers of the system might be the ones forced to answer such questions as: What is the maximum number of objectives that a student might be studying at one time? What is the maximum number of days that a student might work on one objective? What is the maximum number of objectives that a student might complete in one year? The persons who make the decisions that answer these questions will be making assumptions about the educational process—and they may be ill-equipped to do so — that may later turn out to be restrictions on that process ("I'm sorry, Johnny, but you can only be working on five objectives at one time").

There are two problems at work here. One problem is the deviation of the implementation from the system designed and approved by the relevant body. This problem is discussed by Cronbach et al. (1980) with regard to program evaluation. They point out that the program being evaluated will almost always differ, in important ways, with respect to the original program definition (as well as to the units to which it is being applied and the types of observations themselves).

The second type of variation, as described by Cronbach et al., is the differences in program (plus units and observations) that are found between the various implementation sites. In computer applications, this entails the same computer program being used in different ways at different sites, as well as the modification of computer programs when implemented on different computer systems.

The message from Cronbach et al. might be summarized as follows: It is often not valid to assume that the program you have implemented is the one which you intended to implement.

The Research Assumption

Underlying our interest in the application of computers to education is the assumption that educational research can have a positive influence on the ways in which computers are used in education. Is this assumption warranted? There are at least two lines of reasoning that suggest it is not.

In 1965, the Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC) at the University of Pittsburgh had a computer system that would provide spelling drills as one of their many investigations into the uses of computers in education (for a more complete description, see Ragsdale, 1969). At that time, and over the following years, a number of other educational research institutions had similar systems. The major deterrent to the transfer of knowledge (about the computerized improvement of spelling) to the classroom was the cost of the equipment required. The picture changed completely, however, when Texas Instruments recently offered a spelling drill device that incorporated microprocessor, keyboard, and random-access audio for approximately $50 U.S.

Thus, when a large corporation like Texas Instruments makes a decision to mass produce an educational device, the technological impact is much greater than that of the accumulation of instructional knowledge by educational researchers. In fairness, it must be pointed out that research related to spelling drills was not a major priority at LRDC and other similar institutions, but the point is still valid. The careful accumulation of educational wisdom intended for institutional use may become irrelevant when industry is almost instantaneously able to provide the necessary electronic technology, in an inexpensive form, directly to the student.

Another belief was questioned by Scriven (1981) recently, when he asserted that, although the widespread use of computers appeared to be inevitable, it did not follow that all applications of computers were similarly inevitable. He cited programmed instruction (PI) and performance contracting as examples of applications of instructional technology which had been rejected by the educational community although it appears that they work when applied in a careful manner.

Programmed instruction is a particularly interesting case, since it has had a long and productive history in military and industrial applications, but was very short-lived with the educational establishment. A plausible explanation for this is that the initial success of PI was based on carefully developed sequences prepared by experts, whereas the later rejection was based on a flood of material hastily prepared by untrained authors. One could also say that the schools saw the initial success of relatively expensive PI and then acquired the cheapest material available, or created their own, with the unsurprising result that the materials were not satisfactory.

If we look at the history of CAI, we may conclude that it is following the same path as PI. Over the past twenty years, CAI systems and materials have been developed at a number of research sites. The production of materials has been expensive, requiring as many as 300 hours of effort to produce one hour of CAI instruction; however, there have been consistently good results from those large-scale efforts, such as CAN in Ontario and PLATO in the U.S., which have invested large amounts of skilled labor time in their materials.

Up to this point, owing to the expense of CAI on large computer systems, there has been little personal experience with CAI in most schools. This situation is now changing rapidly, as in the case of the spelling drills, and it is now possible for most schools and/or teachers to use or create CAI on microcomputers located in the classroom. Just as with PI, the CAI material now flooding the market is cheaper but less carefully developed than the sequences which have been shown to be successful in earlier research. Yet more discouraging is the plan of many school boards to make CAI the major application for microcomputers, even though there is little material available and only a small portion of that has developed properly. The existence of CAI as a useful application in educational institutions becomes even more tenuous with the planned use of locally produced CAI lessons within some boards. Meanwhile, as we produce the sequel to "The Life and Death of PI," with CAI in the starring role, the applications of CAI in military and industrial installations continue to prosper.

For the above reasons, not only is it questionable that educational research can have a positive impact on the kinds of technology made available to the schools—as with spelling drills—but in some cases it also seems that the effectiveness of methods which are discovered, such as PI and CAI, can be almost completely negated by premature and inadequate implementations within the educational system. Computers may be robust, in that people will need to use and understand computers in order to work and live, but some of their applications are fragile. Although computers are not like teaching machines and language labs, in that they are a growing part of the everyday world, we must therefore question the assumption that computers will be used in schools to do all the tasks for which computers are best suited.

Conclusion

The general conclusion is that computer applications in education should be subjected to greater examination before they are implemented. A practical suggestion might be to require approval from one or more non-users in the discipline where the implementation will take place. Other procedures which would make the process more sensitive to the needs and preferences of non-users are also to be commended.

There is a final note of caution, however, that should be applied even when all concerned—user and non-user alike—agree that the use of computers is well justified. This is that a proposed use of computers in education not be undertaken unless there is assurance that there are sufficient resources, both human and equipment, to ensure that the implementation will be well designed and carefully done. This is a necessity if we are to develop well-conceived computer applications that have a chance of surviving.

The general rules might be expressed as: (1) Propose new applications of computers only when they will result in an improvement in the existing procedures; and (2), implement a computerized solution only when there are sufficient resources to make its success a likely event. It is amazing how obvious these rules appear, when one considers how frequently they are ignored.□

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hear ye! hear ye!
Come one Come all
and relive the past on
Shakespeare
Day

See the beheading of Queen Mary
Shake the hand of William Shakespeare
Bow to Queen Elizabeth I
Enjoy! Enjoy Enjoy
May 26, 27

Fun with Shakespeare

Catharine Dixon,
Elliot Lake

Studying Shakespeare *can* be fun. Perhaps the students of a high school in Northern Ontario who attempted an innovative approach to mastering the complexities of Shakespeare's plays were as astonished as the rest of the community to discover how meaningful the experience could be.

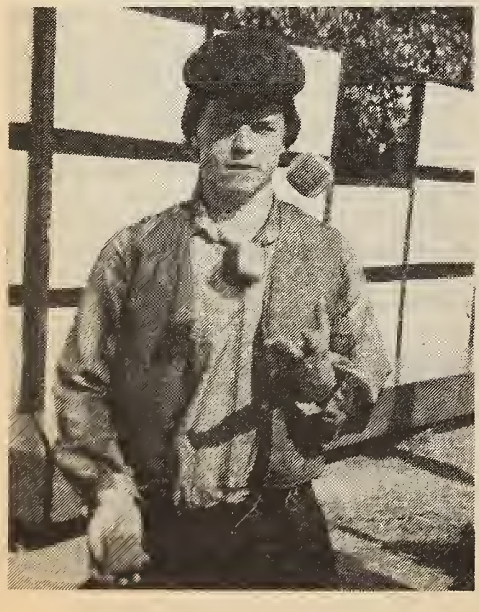
In brief, the students of Elliot Lake Secondary School set out to recreate a Shakespearean village in the courtyard of their school. The village contained shops, castles, instruments of torture, and, of course, a theatre. The grade 12 English classes who constructed the sets also donned costumes of the period and were cast in various roles. The effect was startling.

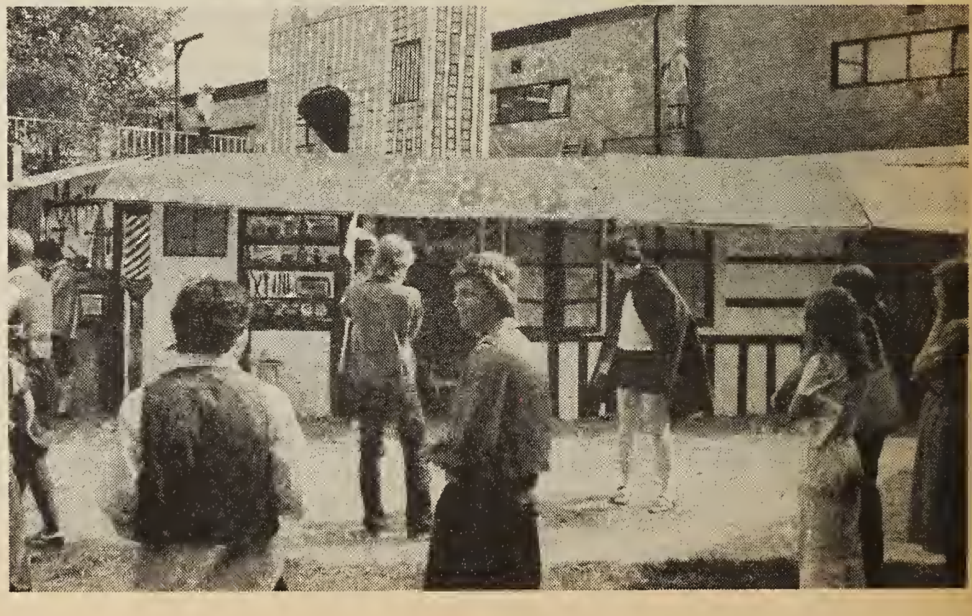
Along a straw-littered street, merchants of the Elizabethan age were plying their trades. The apothecary was there with all his strange potions. A doctor was healing the sick and foretelling the future by examining the entrails of animals. Hawkers were selling apple cider, rum butter, oranges, apples, and nuts.

Popular amusements of the era were also acted out. Two jugglers were trying to outdo each other by cleverly manipulating their colored balls. On the village green a dance of the period took place at regular intervals, to the haunting music of "Greensleeves" played by a wandering minstrel. There were also sword fights from time to time.

But the main focus of the event was undoubtedly on the theatre, accurately constructed to resemble a theatre of Elizabethan times. Here all the English classes in the school took turns presenting

Left: Dancing on the green.
Bottom left: One of the jugglers.
Bottom right: The Shakespearean village set up in the courtyard.





Above: Two miscreants in the stocks. Right: Queen Elizabeth I and Shakespeare introduce a play.

portions of the various plays they were studying. *Julius Caesar, King Lear, Romeo and Juliet, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Macbeth* were all included.

Following the ringing of a bell and the flourish of a trumpet, Shakespeare himself would appear to introduce each play. Sometimes Elizabeth I, Queen of England, would appear, regal in purple velvet.

"I am pleased to be here to see this play," she would say to the public, before proceeding to a favorably placed throne-like chair.

After explaining in what year he wrote the particular play about to be seen, Shakespeare would call forth the actors. Their audience would be two classes of students, released from their regular daily schedules for one period to enjoy the drama.

As lame Baptista in *The Taming of the Shrew* remonstrated with his daughters Bianca and Kate, both charmingly gowned and barefooted, or the witches danced in *Macbeth,* or Caesar cried out "Et tu Brutus!" in *Julius Caesar,* the students would watch spellbound. They seemed to be asking, "Can this be Shakespeare? Dull, pedantic, difficult to understand Shakespeare?"

The English classes which presented the various scenes from different plays by Shakespeare did so with lively action, charm, and sensitivity, to the delight of everyone. Some time in the future Shakespeare's plays may once again be considered stuffy, tedious pieces of literature, but to the students taking part in Shakespeare Days at Elliot Lake Secondary School in May of '82, never, ever!

A scene from "Julius Caesar".

After attending the play at the theatre, the students were free to wander around the courtyard and experience other facets of life from a typical day in the England of Shakespeare's time.

In a classroom of the age, a schoolmaster was busy trying to instil wisdom into the heads of his aristocratic young charges, while the vast majority of citizens (grade 12 students dressed as such) went about their regular business in the courtyard, oblivious to the pursuits of learning. It would be some time before universal education would enable the lower classes to break from the bonds of the class into which they had been born.

Among the throng in the courtyard, a few were being chased by law enforcers and charged with having committed various misdemeanors, such as disorderly or drunken conduct or theft. A magistrate arrived, suitably gowned and sober looking. The guilty unfortunates were condemned to the rack or the stocks where, once fitted into these instruments of torture, they became the objects of public ridicule. All present were intrigued by these grim reminders of a semi-barbaric past.

High on a hill in the background, behind a castle wall, swung two ill-fated corpses, a ghastly warning to all of the price to be paid for more serious crimes, such as treason.

A final comment on crime and punishment of the era was the reenactment of the beheading of Mary, Queen of Scots. Hooded in black, she was led into the courtyard. Behind a wall, a hooded dummy had been substituted for the real person, but the effect of severing head from body with one stroke of a wicked-looking axe was still arrestingly grisly.

The moralistic nature of the times was driven home by a parson who delivered a lecture on the value of a virtuous life. From a soapbox, he read portions of the Bible in a loud, clear voice. From the same soapbox a citizen delivered an impassioned address on the evils of tobacco, while a citizen of the day smoked complacently near by, an ironical comment on society then and now. An exhortation on the position of women in society elicited "boos" from the modern-day female onlookers. How times have changed!

The cider merchants.

Some of the visitors wandered off to have their palms read or consult with an astrologist on their prospects for future happiness. A rat scrambling from a hole in the wall induced an ear-splitting shriek from a frightened lady, which brought the rat killer running to exterminate the varmint by a blow on the head.

During the two lunch periods on Shakespeare Days a feast was served. Costumed students brought their clients thick vegetable soup and homemade bread. They barbecued chicken legs and spare ribs, and served them with baked potatoes, tomatoes, and grapes.

During every class period for two whole days, different classes were permitted to visit the Elizabethan village in the courtyard and experience the daily routines of "a typical day in old England."

"Our aim in reenacting this day was to take the study of William Shakespeare from hard copy and bring it to life," explained the teacher and student organizers of this unusual event. As a visitor to Shakespeare Day, I can pay no greater tribute to an imaginative English department than to say, "They succeeded!" □

Profile of a School

Oakwood Collegiate Institute

This year, Oakwood Collegiate will be celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary. The original school building on St. Clair Avenue West in Toronto has been added to over the years—an athletics wing and music complex in the '30s and a library and science wing in the '60s—and the present student enrolment stands at around 1300.

In the north-west part of Toronto that the school serves, there is a large Italian community, and this is reflected in the student population—about 50 percent Italian, 30 percent Anglo-Saxon, and the remainder from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Says Vice-Principal Bastedo: "The Italian influence makes for a warm and friendly atmosphere."

In common with other collegiate institutes, Oakwood enjoys a strong academic tradition. The computer sciences have recently become an integral part of the program; however, what the school is chiefly renowned for—internationally and across Canada—is its music program, in which about a third of the students participate. There are senior and junior symphony orchestras, at least six choirs, and numerous other instrumental groups. Drama, too, is another great strength of the school. In sports, Oakwood has been a powerhouse at basketball during the past few years; and although there is no longer a football team, soccer and rugger are both popular.

The school's seventy-fifth anniversary will be celebrated with an athletic banquet on April 28, a nostalgia concert on April 29, and an open house on April 30, with a special luncheon for present and former staff.

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